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Radical Islam in East Africa

Angel Rabasa

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Preface

Historically, Africa has not been a central theater in U.S. strategic planning. U.S. interests there have been viewed as marginal, and the threats to those interests have not been considered serious enough to require the deployment of significant resources or policy attention. In recent years, however, Africa has come to be regarded as an increasingly important region, where American geopolitical interests and the potential threats to those interests are both on the rise. Consequently, the Department of Defense is abandoning its traditional policy of strategic minimalism in favor of a more robust approach, signified most prominently by the establishment of a unified combatant command for Africa.

This monograph is part of a broader study of U.S. security roles in sub-Saharan Africa that is meant to inform ongoing efforts to restructure the U.S. military command arrangements in Africa and to posture air and space capabilities, as well as other U.S. government assets, to more effectively protect and advance American national interests on the continent. The monograph deals with the rising threat to U.S. interests represented by the spread of militant Islamism and the development of radical Islamist networks in East Africa. Equally important, however, it seeks to place those trends in the broad context of the diverse currents of Islamic practice in the region and the social, economic, and political factors that have shaped the security environment in East Africa.

The monograph examines the complex ethno-religious landscape in East Africa, the characteristics of the East African environment that have produced failed or weak states susceptible to exploitation by

extremist groups, and the factors that have contributed to the emergence of these groups. It concludes with a series of recommendations for countering or mitigating the effects of adverse trends and protecting U.S. interests in East Africa.

The research for this study was sponsored by Brig Gen Michael A. Snodgrass, USAF, who until the fall of 2007 served as Director of Plans, Programs, and Analyses at Headquarters United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE/A5/A8). It is part of a project entitled "U.S. Security Roles in Africa," led by Adam Grissom, and was carried out in the Strategy and Doctrine Program of RAND Project AIR FORCE. Research for this project was completed in October 2007. The book should be of value to the national security community and interested members of the general public, especially those with an interest in African security issues and politico-religious trends in the Muslim world.

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The most serious threats to the United States and U.S. allies and interests in East Africa are al-Qaeda activities in the region and increasing levels of radicalization among sectors of the East African Muslim population. East Africa has been a sanctuary and base for Islamist terrorist operations since the early 1990s and remains a priority area in al-Qaeda's global strategy. The weakness of African governments and the internal fighting and corruption of these regimes facilitate the ability of terrorists to move, plan, and organize.

Although al-Qaeda represents the primary terrorist threat to U.S. interests in East Africa, it is only one component of a much larger universe of radical Islamist groups and organizations in the region. There are numerous indigenous radical Islamist groups in East Africa with varying degrees of affinity to al-Qaeda's agenda. In addition, missionary groups—many funded by Saudi charities—are actively propagating a radical, fundamentalist, Salafi interpretation of Islam that, while not necessarily violent, function as gateways to terrorism.

Geographic proximity and social, cultural, and religious affinities between East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula make East Africa susceptible to infiltration by radical activists and ideologies from the Middle East. This is not to suggest that East Africa is necessarily fertile soil for radical Islamism. Although Salafism has made inroads among the educated elites, traditional and Sufi practices continue to predominate among the mass of the Muslim population. Despite the effects of such externalities as the proliferation of Gulf charities in the region,

the strength of Islam rooted in local cultures acts to retard the spread of extremist ideas.

The counterterrorism assistance programs that are now being implemented in East Africa, if sustained, could help lay the groundwork for a more robust regime of counterterrorism collaboration in East Africa. Counterterrorism assistance alone, however, is unlikely to provide an effective long-term solution to the challenges of Islamist extremism and terrorism. An effective long-term solution would require attacking the conditions that make the region hospitable to extremist and terrorist elements. A strategic approach would include the following elements:

Strengthen state institutions and civil society. This could be done through programs that augment human capital, improve public administration and the delivery of government services, professionalize (and in some cases decriminalize) the military and police forces, and support the work of benign nongovernmental organizations. (See pp. 8–20.)

Consider making use of the funded Defense Resource Management Studies (DRMS) program funded by the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation (OSD/PA&E) in East Africa to help rationalize and strengthen regional countries' military and internal security structures. This program helps partner countries to rationalize their defense resource management systems and decisionmaking process, build the staff skills necessary to implement the project, and begin to analyze the real-life issues confronting them.[1] (See pp. 75–76.)

Take stronger steps to promote a political settlement among Somali factions that permits the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Mogadishu. There are two possible negotiating tracks. One is between the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) and the Asmara-based opposition. This track may not be feasible because of lack of political will on either side, but an effort should be made to detach the moderate (or less radical) sector of the Asmara group,

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[1] Wade Hinkle, "Making America's Security Partners Better Resource Managers," *IDA Research Notes,* 2007.

possibly using the good offices of an Arab League state. The second, and possibly more promising track, would be to promote negotiations between the TFG and the Hawiye Leadership Committee—a non-violent group that claims to speak for Mogadishu's dominant Hawiye clan. For this approach to work, a government of national reconciliation that includes the major Hawiye sectors that have been left out of the process would have to be forged. Moving the TFG along this path would require pressure on the TFG (and possibly on the TFG's Ethiopian patrons) by the United States, the European Union, and African partners. (See pp. 63–69.)

Consider using diplomatic recognition of Somaliland as an incentive to keep Somaliland on a democratic track and secure effective cooperation in counterterrorism. Unfortunately, the arrest of the leadership of the opposition Qaran Party by the Rayale administration in July 2007 has set back the democratization process in Somaliland. However, an incentive package linked to political reconciliation and free elections could help bring about a restoration of the democratic process. Elements of such a package could include granting Somaliland the status that Montenegro enjoyed prior to formal independence from Serbia-Montenegro. As part of a package involving steps toward recognition of Somaliland, the United States could explore U.S. Air Force use of the air facility at Berbera to augment U.S. air access in the Horn of Africa–Middle East–Persian Gulf region. (See pp. 10–12.)

Acknowledge that the United States will maintain a military presence in the Horn of Africa for the foreseeable future, and build the appropriate infrastructure to support it. To enhance the effectiveness of the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and preserve the continuity of its interaction with regional militaries, the basing status of the CJTF-HOA should be changed from expeditionary to permanent. Tours should be changed from unaccompanied and short-term to accompanied and of longer duration. (See pp. 71–72.)

Assist cooperating regional governments in gaining better control of their borders, both land and maritime, through provision of training, platforms, and surveillance systems appropriate to the environment and the regional country's capabilities. Strengthening border

control is particularly important in the case of friendly countries bordering on southern Somalia, i.e., Ethiopia and Kenya, to prevent the movement of Somalia-based terrorists across their borders. (See pp. 20–21.)

Deter external support of radical groups operating in East Africa. Together with coalition partners, the United States needs to reassess its policy toward Eritrea and develop points of leverage to dissuade the Eritrean government from continuing to support extremists in Somalia and Ethiopia. (See pp. 34, 44–49, and 67–70.)

Reduce the influence of foreign Islamist organizations by identifying mainstream and Sufi Muslim sectors and helping them propagate moderate interpretations of Islam and delegitimize terrorism. Given that Islamist organizations use the provision of social services to advance their agenda, ways should be explored to help moderate Muslim nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) provide social services and therefore reduce the influence of Islamist NGOs. Of course, this assistance should be extended in ways that do not compromise the credibility of the moderate groups. (See pp. 40–44.)

Begin to remove barriers to economic growth. There is general agreement in the policy community on the need to promote economic opportunity, especially for the young, in order to reduce the pool of potential jihadi recruits. However, given the magnitude of the barriers to economic growth in East Africa, it would be more realistic to recommend a process for identifying and beginning to remove or lower these barriers to the extent feasible. The critical requirements are the establishment of a modicum of order and security and predictability in the behavior of governments and their agents, mitigation of corruption (at least in the delivery of international assistance), reduction of trade barriers, debt relief where appropriate, and promotion of entrepreneurship with a focus on small-sized enterprises.

The overall aim should be to build sustained national resilience that is intolerant of terrorists and extremists and effective against them. This can only occur if hard security initiatives are linked with a broader array of policies designed to promote political, social, and economic stability. Without such a two-track approach, there is little chance that counterterrorist modalities will take root. (See pp. 77–78.)

Acknowledgments

This project would not have been possible without the collaboration of many people in East Africa and outside who directed assisted or facilitated our research. First of all, we are greatly indebted to Ladan Afi, a 2007 RAND summer associate who is currently conducting doctoral research at the University of Wisconsin, for her outstanding work analyzing religious and political developments in the Horn of Africa. We also thank the reviewers of this monograph, William Reno, Associate Professor of Political Science, Northwestern University, for his insights into the nature of East African societies and politics referenced throughout the text; and Peter Chalk, Senior Political Scientist, the RAND Corporation, for his careful review of the draft.

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project, but because of the political sensitivity of the issues discussed prefer not be individually named.

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Abbreviations

AFRICOM	U.S. African Command
AIAI	Al-Ittihad al-Islami
AMA	African Muslim Agency
AMIS	African Union Mission in the Sudan
AOR	area of responsibility
ARC	Africa Relief Committee
ARPCT	Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (Somalia)
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama'a
AU	African Union
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa
DRMS	Defense Resource Management Studies
EACTI	East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative
EIJ	Egyptian Islamic Jihad
EIJM	Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
FPENS	Formal Private Education Network in Somalia
GPOI	Global Peace Operations Initiative
ICU	Islamic Courts Union (Somalia)
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement (Sudan)

NGO	nongovernmental organization
NIF	National Islamic Front (Sudan)
OEF-TS	Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans Sahara
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OSD/PA&E	Office of the Secretary of Defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation
PAIC	Popular Arab and Islamic Conference
SIMAD	Somali Institute for Management Administration and Development
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLM	Sudan Liberation Movement
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
TFG	Transitional Federal Government (Somalia)
TPDM	Tigray People's Democratic Movement
TSCTI	Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative
UFLWS	United Front for the Liberation of Western Somalia
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WAMY	World Assembly of Muslim Youth
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

Al-Qaeda in East Africa

The most serious threats to the United States and its allies and interests in East Africa—which, for the purpose of this study, we define as the area from the Sudan to Tanzania—are the al-Qaeda presence in the region and increasing levels of radicalization among sectors of the East African Muslim population. This monograph examines the scope of the problem of Islamic extremism and terrorism in East Africa and the conditions in the region that are conducive to terrorist and radical activity, assesses current U.S. and international counterterrorism and state capacity-building programs, and seeks to identify the building blocks of a comprehensive security approach to this region.

East Africa remains a priority area in al-Qaeda's global strategy.[1] In the early 1990s, al-Qaeda established a base in Sudan, where a military-Islamist regime had taken power in 1989. In 1992 and 1993, after the overthrow of Somali dictator Mohammed Siad Barre, al-Qaeda's then-deputy military chief Muhammad Atef made several trips to Somalia from al-Qaeda's base in Khartoum. The Harmony documents on Somalia suggest that while al-Qaeda's primary objective

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[1] According to al-Qaeda sources, al-Qaeda's strategy, which al-Qaeda expects to unfold between 2000 and 2020, consists of seven phases. These include the "awakening" of the Muslim nation (*umma*); the overthrow of "apostate" regimes in the Muslim world; the reestablishment of the Caliphate; and the worldwide victory over infidel regimes. Yassin Musharbash, "What al-Qaida Really Wants," *Spiegel International*, April 12, 2005. To attain these goals, al-Qaeda seeks to incorporate local radical Islamist groups into a global movement. See Angel Rabasa, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Sara A. Daly, Heather S. Gregg, Theodore W. Karasik, Kevin A. O'Brien, and William Rosenau, *Beyond al-Qaeda: Part 1, The Global Jihadist Movement,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2006.

in Somalia appears to have been to establish working relations with Somali militants and to establish training camps in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and in Somalia, Kenya was a more conducive setting for carrying out operations. The documents paint a portrait of al-Qaeda cells operating freely in Kenya without concern about being monitored or detained by the authorities.[2]

From the mid-1990s, East Africa (together with Yemen, which is part of the same geopolitical region) has been a central theater of al-Qaeda operations. Al-Qaeda's military chief, Ali al-Rashidi, alias Abu Ubadiah al-Banshiri, drowned in Lake Victoria in May 1996 while preparing the bombings of American embassies in East Africa.[3] Planning for African operations continued after al-Banshiri's death and al-Qaeda's expulsion from Sudan in 1996. In August 1998, al-Qaeda carried out two of its most spectacular pre-9/11 terrorist attacks: the suicide bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In November 2002, al-Qaeda conducted two nearly simultaneous attacks in Kenya: the car bombing of the Paradise Hotel and the failed surface-to-air missile attack on an Israeli charter aircraft taking off from Mombasa airport.

An article published in June 2006 in the jihadi virtual magazine *Sada al-Jihad* ("Echo of Jihad") by Abu Azzam al-Ansari, entitled "Al-Qaeda is moving to Africa," and recirculated in February 2007 in jihadi forums as "Al-Qaeda Organization and the African Continent: Past, Present and Future," provides an analysis of Africa's role in al-Qaeda's strategy. According to the article, al-Qaeda had always been aware of Africa's importance, as reflected in numerous al-Qaeda operations in the East and North Africa: the bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar as-Salaam in August 1998; the Djerba

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[2] The Harmony documents on Somalia consist of several hundred pages of transcripts, all but one attributed to al-Qaeda operatives. They were released for a report entitled *Al-Qa'ida's (mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, West Point, N.Y.: United States Military Academy, Harmony Project, 2006a.

[3] Al-Banshiri was a passenger on the Bukova-Mwanza ferry, which capsized with 480 passengers on board. Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror,* New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 26.

synagogue bombing in Tunisia in April 2002; and the bombings in Casablanca, Sharm al-Sheikh, and the Sinai.[4]

According to al-Ansari, the weakness of African governments and the internal fighting and corruption of these regimes facilitate the ability of the mujahidin to move, plan, and organize. These conditions, he says, provide a golden opportunity for al-Qaeda fighters to move easily between various African countries without any surveillance and to obtain huge amounts of weapons and military equipment easily and, in most cases, more cheaply than in other regions. In addition, al-Ansari says, the poverty and the social needs prevalent in most African countries will enable the mujahidin to provide some financing and welfare benefits and thereby post some influential operatives.[5]

Conflicts in Africa can be opportunistically exploited by al-Qaeda and associated radical ideologues who seek to represent these conflicts as jihads. Sheikh Hamed al-Ali, a well-known Kuwaiti Salafi ideologue, stated in December 2006 that Muslims in Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, Africa in general, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are obligated to participate in the jihad.[6] Messages posted on jihadi Web sites offer maps, encouragement, and strategic advice to fighters preparing to travel to Somalia. One posting in January 2007 argued that Somalia is the "southern gate" to Jerusalem and that if the country is lost, "regret, repentance, degradation, and horror" will haunt the Muslims.[7]

In a January 2007 audio message, al-Qaeda's second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, calls upon Muslims everywhere, specifically those in Yemen, the Arabian peninsula, Egypt, North Africa, and Sudan, to participate in a jihad against Ethiopia and provide Somali

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[4] Moshe Terdman, "Factors Facilitating the Rise of Radical Islamism and Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa," The Project for Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM), GLORIA Center, African Occasional Papers, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2007b.

[5] Terdman, 2007b.

[6] SITE Intelligence Group, "Jihad Against the Hateful Christian Ethiopia," by Sheikh Hamed al-Ali, December 27, 2006.

[7] SITE Intelligence Group, "The Way to Jihad in Somalia: Maps and Encouragement," January 16, 2007; see also SITE Intelligence Group, "Strategic and Military Advice from the Supporters of Somalia Network to the Somali Mujahideen," January 9, 2007.

Muslims with men, experience, money, and advice to defeat the Ethiopian forces, whom he refers to as the "slaves of America."[8]

In Darfur, the conflict involves Muslims victimized by a Muslim-dominated government. Nevertheless, on April 23, 2006, al-Jazeera broadcast an audiotape in which bin Laden called on "mujahidin and their supporters, especially in Sudan and the Arabian Peninsula, to prepare for a long war against the Crusader plunderers in Western Sudan." After bin Laden's statement, interest in Darfur grew in jihadi circles, with numerous postings on radical Web sites concerning Darfur and how to reach it.[9]

Although al-Qaeda represents the primary terrorist threat to U.S. interests in East Africa, it is only one component of a much larger universe of radical Islamist groups and organizations in the region. There are numerous indigenous radical Islamist groups in East Africa with varying degrees of affinity to al-Qaeda's agenda. There are also missionary groups, many funded by Saudi and other Gulf charities, actively propagating a radical Salafi interpretation of Islam that, while not necessarily violent, function as a gateway to terrorism (see the discussion of Islamic charities below).

Al-Qaeda's strategy, in East Africa as elsewhere, seeks to incorporate local militants into the global jihad. The global jihadist movement gains strength to the extent that it can co-opt local struggles. Nevertheless, even local groups with the greatest affinity to al-Qaeda have their own parochial agendas. Somalia's al-Ittihad al-Islami, a now largely defunct group active in Somalia in the 1980s and 1990s, was alleged to

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[8] SITE Intelligence Group, "Audio Message from Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri Issued by as-Sahab Addressed to Muslims: 'Set Out and Support Your Brothers in Somalia,'" January 2007. Although the Ethiopian population is split between Christian and Muslim, historically there has been little animosity between adherents of the two religions. (See section on Islam in Ethiopia and Eritrea). Nevertheless, al-Qaeda presented the invasion of Somalia, a Muslim country, by the forces of a non-Muslim government as creating the conditions for jihad.

[9] Moshe Terdman, "Al Qaeda in Sudan—A Failure or Success?" The Project for Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM), GLORIA Center, *Islam in Africa Newsletter,* Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2007a. See also SITE Intelligence Center, "Calls for Mujahideen to Travel to Darfur, Sudan for Jihad, Following Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri Message on the Subject," October 3, 2006.

have established links to al-Qaeda,[10] but the group's dominant driver appears to have been a combination of Islamism and an anti-Ethiopian Somali nationalist agenda. Organizations linked to al-Qaeda include the Popular Resistance Movement in the Land of the Two Migrations, an offshoot of the radical wing of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) of Somalia, and the al-Qaeda Organization in Sudan and Africa, responsible for the beheadings of prominent Sudanese personalities.[11]

It is unclear whether al-Qaeda today views East Africa primarily as a logistical hub or as a theater of terrorist operations. East Africa's proximity to the Arabian Peninsula (discussed in greater detail below) enhances its potential, relative to other parts of Africa, as a conduit and support base for al-Qaeda activities beyond the region itself. At the same, the more developed parts of East Africa present lucrative targets associated with Western presence and influence.

From a counterterrorist perspective, it is important to understand the nature and agenda of local Islamist groups; their relationship to transnational movements, particularly al-Qaeda and other components of the global jihadist movement; the considerations that might lead them to cooperate with al-Qaeda, as well as the contradictions and frictions that inevitably arise between al-Qaeda's global vision and the national agendas that many local groups naturally pursue.[12] The global movement that al-Qaeda is seeking to build gains strength to the extent that it can co-opt local struggles. If it cannot, the global movement loses coherence and focus. It follows that a comprehensive U.S. strategy needs to move beyond the boundaries of conventional counterterrorism theory and practice and seek to discourage or prevent the incorporation of indigenous groups into al-Qaeda's global agenda.

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[10] See David Shinn, "Ethiopia: Coping with Islamic Fundamentalism Before and After September 11," Center for Strategic and International Studies, Africa Notes No. 7, February 2002; Combating Terrorism Center, 2006a; "Al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI)," Counterterrorism 2008; Rabasa et al., 2006, p. 131.

[11] Terdman, 2007b.

[12] For a more detailed analysis of the relationship between al-Qaeda and local Islamists, see Rabasa et al., 2006.

CHAPTER TWO

Characteristics of East African Environment Conducive to a Jihadist Presence

East Africa's conduciveness to the presence of Islamist extremists is the consequence of several characteristics of the East African environment: weak governance and collapsed states, alternative power centers, the prevalence of the informal economy, porous borders, widespread access to illegal weapons, proximity to the Arabian Peninsula, and operational access to attack venues.[1]

In assessing East Africa's conduciveness to terrorism, a distinction must be made between Kenya and Tanzania, which provide a different type of environment for terrorist networks by virtue of their relatively high degree of bureaucratization, and Somalia, which has been in a condition of statelessness since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. The large urban areas of Kenya and Tanzania, along with their somewhat functional infrastructures and reasonably ordered societies, give outsiders the anonymity and resources they need to build their networks.

In contrast, in stateless Somalia, with its dense clan-based social connections, the authorities (to the extent that they are present) have a capacity for close surveillance of outsiders. This makes Somalia a

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1 For analyses of the conditions that produce terrorist sanctuaries in East Africa, see Angel Rabasa, Steven Boraz, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Theodore W. Karasik, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Kevin A. O'Brien, and John E. Peters, *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-561, August 2007; and "The Challenges of Weak and Failed States," in Combating Terrorism Center, 2006a.

difficult place for outsiders, unless they have the protection of local groups. Documents from al-Qaeda operatives in Somalia in the 1990s, published in the Harmony series, present evidence that these operatives found Somalia a relatively inhospitable and challenging environment.[2] Although outsiders may succeed in co-opting a local group, the segmentation of social groups and the nature of social relationships would limit their capacity to extend their influence. This makes Kenya and Tanzania more conducive to the development of terrorist networks, even if Somalia becomes a refuge for some of them.[3]

Weak Governance and Collapsed States

Weak governments and political and social disorder throughout the region create an environment in which informal power structures flourish. Southern Somalia has been without a functioning government since the overthrow of the dictatorship of Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991 and remains the most volatile and the most insecure part of Somalia. Governance, such as it is, was exercised by clan-based warlords until the ICU gained control of Mogadishu in June 2006 after defeating the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT), a collection of Mogadishu warlords and power brokers backed by the United States and some regional states. The ICU government was in turn overthrown by the Ethiopian invasion of December 2006, which installed the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in power in Mogadishu, backed by the United States, Ethiopia, and other regional governments.

The strategic calculus of the different external actors in the events leading to the Ethiopian invasion was driven by the threat—real or perceived—that the ICU takeover in Mogadishu presented to their security interests. Ethiopia's policy toward the ICU was driven by con-

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[2] Combating Terrorism Center, 2006a, p. 43.

[3] In Somalia, institutions such as *xeer* (customary law) require that one be connected to kinship networks if one is to get protection. I am indebted to the reviewer of this monograph, William Reno, for this analysis of the regional environment.

cern over the emergence of a reunified Somalia under the control of a government that Addis Ababa believed harbored irredentist ambitions toward the Ogaden, the sparsely populated region of eastern Ethiopia populated by ethnic Somalis. Adding to Ethiopia's concerns were the ICU's reliance on Eritrea and fear that an Islamist government in Somalia might stimulate the radicalization of its own Muslim population.[4] From the U.S. perspective, there was the concern that al-Qaeda could establish a base in ICU-controlled territory with the support of a sympathetic sector of the ICU. External intervention in Somalia by different parties with different agendas was, of course, both the result of, and a contributing factor to, the long period of statelessness. Several factors account for the chronic instability in Somalia:

1. The legacy of 15 years of warlordism and internal conflict, which destroyed much of the (already minimal) physical and governmental infrastructure of southern Somalia
2. Clan rivalries, which permeate all aspects of political and social life in Somalia
3. The influence of radical Islamists and their ambition to unify the Somali lands (Somalia, Djibouti, northern Kenya, and the Ogaden) in a *shari'a*-based state
4. The physical environment itself—most of Somalia has a semi-arid-to-arid environment suitable only for the nomadic pastoralism practiced by well over half the population—which retarded the development of urban centers and associated state institutions.[5]

Southern Somalia has borne the brunt of the civil war the past 17 years, with most of the fighting and destruction focused on Mogadishu

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[4] Author's discussions with government officials and diplomats in the Horn of Africa, May 2007. See also "Ethiopia's Security Agenda," in International Crisis Group (ICG), "Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead," Africa Briefing No. 45, Nairobi/Brussels, January 26, 2007; "Ethio-Eritrean Factors in the Somalian Saga," *Addis Fortune,* September 24, 2006; and "Understanding Somalia," *Addis Fortune,* October 1, 2006.

[5] Only in limited areas of moderate rainfall in the northwest and the southwest is agriculture practiced to any extent. "Somalia Physical Setting," 2008, Geographic.org.

and the southern cities. Southern Somalia is much more diverse than Somaliland or Central Somalia (Puntland), with greater variations in clans and other identity groups (see Figure 2.1). It has also experienced more external interventions than the other two regions. It was the scene of U.S.-backed UN interventions from 1992 to 1995, infiltration by foreign militants, and an Ethiopian invasion in 2006–2007. Although there have been several attempts to reestablish a central government in Somalia, these efforts have met with little success. The TFG has been able to establish itself in Mogadishu only with Ethiopian military support and it is doubtful that it could survive on its own.[6] Somaliland, in northwestern Somalia, with a population of 3.5 million, has been more successful in establishing a functioning government. Somaliland was a British colony until its independence on June 26, 1960. Six days later, it joined the former Italian colony of Somalia to become the Somali Republic. However, in response to the increasingly oppressive rule of the Siad Barre regime, an opposition movement emerged, the Somali National Movement, based largely on the region's dominant Isaaq clan. The central government responded by targeting the Isaaq and launched a military campaign that included aerial bombing of the main cities and the killing and imprisoning of leading members of the clan. Many Somalilanders fled into Ethiopia, coming back only after the fall of the Siad Barre regime.[7]

Somaliland declared its independence from Somalia in May 1991, reverting to its former colonial borders. Somaliland experienced internal conflicts in 1992 and 1994–1996, but peace was restored through a process mediated by clan elders. Today, Somaliland has a bicameral parliament, judiciary, police force, and municipal structures. Several elections have been held, including a referendum on the Constitution,

[6] This is the opinion of a senior official in a regional intelligence service as well as of well-informed Somali academics. Author's interviews in the Horn of Africa, May 2007.

[7] Discussions with members of the Council of Elders of Somaliland; Bobe Yusuf Duate, Academy for Peace and Development, Hargeisa, Somaliland, May 2007.

Figure 2.1
Map of Southern Somalia, Puntland, and Somaliland, Showing Disputed Areas Between Somaliland and Puntland



RAND *MG782-2.1*

a local election, a presidential election in April 2003, and elections for the lower house of parliament in 2005.[8]

Despite Somaliland's claim to independence, it has not secured international recognition and receives negligible development assistance. Nevertheless, it has a growing economy and a vibrant nongov-

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[8] *Vote for Peace: How Somaliland Successfully Hosted Its First Parliamentary Elections in 35 Years,* Hargeisa (Somaliland): Academy for Peace and Development, September 2006.

ernmental organization (NGO) sector.[9] The view presented by political and social leaders and academics in Somaliland is that, in the absence of international recognition and assistance, this state-building effort could falter. Somalilanders argue that nonrecognition works against stability by creating obstacles to investment and economic development. International recognition, they say, would also strengthen the state's ability to prevent Somaliland from becoming a terrorist sanctuary.[10] However, the case has been made that international recognition and foreign assistance could hurt Somaliland's development. In this view, once external resources begin to flow in significant amounts, many of the Hargeisa government's incentives for state-building, financial self-reliance, and connectivity with the population will diminish.[11]

The democratization process in Somaliland suffered a setback in July 2007 when the Rayale government, which has manifested some authoritarian tendencies, arrested the leaders of the newly established opposition Qaran party on the grounds that they were engaging in unauthorized political activity.[12] In August 2007, three party leaders were sentenced to imprisonment for three years and nine months and banned from political activities for five years.[13]

Somaliland has a contentious relationship with Puntland (its neighbor to the south and a part of Somalia) over the regions of Sool and

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[9] No African nation has wanted to take the first step in recognizing Somaliland's independence without Somalia's agreement. In Africa, Somaliland has opened officially recognized offices in South Africa, Ethiopia, and Ghana. In Europe, the Hargeisa government has offices in London and Brussels. "Somaliland closer to recognition by Ethiopia," *Afrol News,* June 5, 2007.

[10] Author's discussions with political and social leaders and academics, Hargeisa, Somaliland, May 2007.

[11] Communication from Jean-Philippe Peltier, Director, Sub-Saharan African Orientation Course, U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, February 15, 2008.

[12] Among those arrested were the party's leader, M. Gabose; the vice-chair, Mohamed Hashi Elmi, a former mayor of Hargeisa who won a UNESCO prize for his work as mayor; and Jamal Aideed Ibrahim, 51, a telecommunications businessman. Because of Rayale's previous ties to the Siad Barre regime, many see him as utilizing similar methods. "Qaran Party Leaders Arrested," *Somaliland Times,* July 29, 2007.

[13] Amnesty International, "Somaliland: Opposition Party Leaders Jailed After Unfair Trial, Defence Lawyers Fined and Banned from Practising," August 22, 2007.

Sanaag, which are claimed by both states.[14] Fighting flared in October 2007 between the two sides for control of the city of Las Anod, capital of the Sool region, bordering on Ethiopia.[15] The Sanaag region declared its independence from Puntland in July 2007, renamed itself Makhir, and chose Badhan as its capital.[16]

Puntland is a region of diverse clans with a population estimated at about 2.5 million, approximately 30 percent of Somalia's total population.[17] In the Mudug region of Puntland, the Majerteen subclan of the majority Darood clan has historically clashed with the Habr-Gedir subclan of the Hawiye over natural resources and political influence. Puntland also has its own governing institutions. The Puntland government was formed in 1997, in a meeting held in Garoowe and attended by clan elders and political leaders. Prior to that, authority in northeastern Somalia resided with the clan elders and the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) whose members were predominantly Majerteen. In the early 1990s, when the extremist group Al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI) gained strength in Puntland, SSDF forces led by Abdullahi Yusuf (currently president of the TFG) fought and ousted the group in 1992.

Puntland is part of an anticipated federal state of Somalia and the government is largely considered weak, inept and corrupt. Although Yusuf became TFG president in 2004, he governs Puntland from a distance. Puntland's current president, Mohamud Mussa Hersi, usually known as 'Adde Musse, is believed to defer to Yusuf on major issues. Its economic resources are derived primarily from taxes obtained through the port of Bossaso. Additional sources of funding come from frankincense and livestock exports to the Middle East and mineral rights granted to various international companies.

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[14] *Vote for Peace,* 2006.

[15] Abdurahman Warsame, "No Longer at Ease: Fighting in Sool Region between Puntland and Somaliland," October 2, 2007.

[16] "Breaking into Even Smaller Bits?" *The Economist,* October 4, 2007.

[17] Puntland State of Somalia, *Puntland: Facts and Figures*, Ministry of Planning and Statistics, 2003.

Many businesses in Puntland are owned and operated by former AIAI members who turned to business after giving up the armed insurgency (see discussion of AIAI below).[18] These businessmen—who make up what could be called a religious private sector—have stepped in to provide education, health, and social services to the population. Many of the privately run schools in Puntland are owned and operated by former AIAI members. These schools teach a curriculum borrowed from various Arab countries and espouse a Salafi understanding of Islam. In filling the social services gap left by both the Puntland government and international aid agencies, religious business groups have earned a great deal of support. Although not active politically, these groups are believed to be biding their time to reenter the political arena.[19]

The most viable entity in this mosaic of states and quasi-states in the Horn of Africa is Djibouti, where there is a strong French military presence. Djibouti is also the headquarters of both the U.S. Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a seven-member regional organization. Formerly known as the French territory of the Afars and Issas, Djibouti gained its independence from France in 1977. Although Djibouti is not free of the clan tensions typical of all Somali states, the country is stable. The French military presence provides a security guarantee. In addition, there are internal sources of stability: the Djibouti leadership's political skills, an efficient internal security apparatus, and policies designed to foster economic growth and develop Djibouti into an international hub.[20]

As its former names implies, there are two main ethnic groups in Djibouti: the Issas, a Somali ethnic group that constitute 60 percent of

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[18] For example, Puntland allocates less than 5 percent of its revenues to health and education but 50 percent on military and security related services. See World Bank, *Somalia: From Resilience Towards Recovery and Development*, *A Country Economic Memorandum for Somalia*, Report No. 334356-SO, 2006.

[19] Abdurahman Abdulle Osman Shuke, "Case Study On: Traditional Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Structures in Local Governance for Local Development," 2005.

[20] Author's interviews and observations in Djibouti, May 2007.

the population, and the Afars, a non-Somali group, 35 percent of the population. In 1999, Djibouti held its first multiparty election, which led to the presidency of Ismail Omar Guelleh.[21] Djibouti's geographical location—at the entry to the Red Sea—and its seaport make it strategically important. Djibouti remains engaged in Somali issues and hosted one of the Somali reconciliation conferences. Its intelligence service keeps track of developments in the different parts of Somalia.[22]

In Sudan, a government of national unity was established after the signing of the 2004 Naivasha-Machakos Accords, which ended the southern insurgency led by the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). In reality, the country remains split along a north-south, ethno-religious divide between the Arabized, Muslim North and the African, non-Muslim South.[23] The accords provide for a referendum in 2011, which would allow the south to opt for independence. But while ethnic conflict has simmered down in the south, it has flared up in the west, in Darfur.

The Darfur region of western Sudan has been wracked by conflict since 2004. The Janjaweed, a government-backed Arab militia, has systematically targeted the local Fur, Zaghawa, and Massaleit ethnic groups, resulting in mass displacement of population and a major humanitarian crisis.[24] Currently there are diplomatic efforts under way to augment or replace the weak African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) that has been monitoring the situation in Darfur with a United Nations peacekeeping force that would have a stronger mandate, but this initiative has been resisted by the Khartoum government.[25]

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[21] CIA, "Djibouti," *World Factbook* 2008.

[22] Author's discussion with intelligence officials, Djibouti, May 2007.

[23] The definition of who is an Arab is based upon cultural identity, the use of Arabic as mother tongue, and adherence to Islam. Khartoum's policy of Arabizing the non-Arab, non-Muslim south was at the root of the southern insurgency.

[24] See Peter Chalk, "Case Study: The East Africa Corridor," in Rabasa et al., 2007.

[25] Sudanese officials claim that the UN force has a hidden agenda and that its goal is to recolonize Sudan. "Darfur: Bashir Resists Pressure for UN Force," Reuters, September 14, 2006.

Alternative Power Centers

Alternative power centers are pervasive throughout the Horn of Africa in the form of clans, warlords, insurgent groups, Islamist militants, and criminal networks. Clans, divided and subdivided into subclans, lineages, and extended families are the primordial identity units into which Somali society collapsed after the downfall of the Siad Barre regime. In the early stages of the disintegration of the Somali state, warlords derived support from particular clans and subclans. Over time, however, the warlords developed their own power bases independently of the clans—hired guns whose loyalty was to the warlord rather than to the clan. In Somaliland clan elders were able to reassert authority after Somaliland's de facto separation from Somalia, but in southern Somalia clan elders were unable to control the warlords. Clan elders in the south were able to raise forces; but, unlike warlord militias, these forces were not trained or organized on a permanent basis. This disparity in the quality of forces had an important effect in the outcome of the competition for influence within the ICU, as we shall see.[26]

Ethiopia is fighting several secessionist movements, including the ethnic Somali Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), both backed by Ethiopia's arch-enemy, Eritrea. (The sources of the hostility include a border dispute that caused Ethiopia and Eritrea to fight a border war between 1998 and 2000 and a personal feud between Ethiopia's prime minister, Meles Zenawi, and Eritrea's president, Issaias Afwerki). In April 2007, ONLF fighters attacked a Chinese oil exploration facility on the border with Somalia, killed 65 Ethiopians and nine Chinese oil workers, and abducted seven other Chinese, who were later released.[27] Other ethnic-based opposition groups include the Afar National Democratic Front, the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM), and the ethnic Amhara Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front.[28]

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[26] Interviews with Somaliland officials and academics, Hargeisa, May 2007.

[27] "Nine Chinese Workers Killed in Ethiopia," *China Daily,* April 24, 2007.

[28] Andrew McGregor, "Ethiopia Faces Ethnic Fallout from Somalia Intervention," *Terrorism Focus,* Vol. 4, No. 17, June 5, 2007b.

Southern Sudan is under the de facto control of the SPLM, the central government's primary challenger until the peace agreement and the formation of a government of national unity. In Darfur, two rebel groups contest the Sudanese government's control of the region: the Sudan Liberation Movement/Sudan Liberation Army (SLM or SLA), which derives its support from the Fur and Zaghawa ethnic groups, and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), a Zaghawa-led group that espouses an Islamist ideology. In May 2006 the Sudan government and a faction of the SLM signed a peace agreement in Abuja, Nigeria. The agreement, however, did not include the JEM or a dissident faction of the SLM.[29]

The JEM is composed of non-Arab former backers of Sudan's Islamist ideologue Hassan al-Turabi, who were politically marginalized after al-Turabi was removed from power after coming into conflict with president Omar al-Bashir (see the discussion of Sudan below). The group is backed by Chadian President Idriss Déby's Zaghawa-dominated government. The JEM accuses the Khartoum government of discriminating in favor of Arabs. The JEM rejected an appeal from bin Laden calling on the mujahidin to "prepare for war against Crusaders in Western Sudan" because, in the JEM view, the real danger comes from Khartoum, "which is a Muslim government killing other Muslims."[30]

In May 2008, a JEM column of fighters in 150 armored pickup trucks crossed 600 kilometers of desert from rear bases and entered the suburbs of Omdurman, across the Nile River from Khartoum, before being driven off by government forces. The JEM raid on Khartoum is seen by some analysts as payback for the April 2006 assault on the Chadian capital N'Djamena by a rebel force backed by Sudan, but it may also be part of a JEM strategy to spread the conflict beyond Dar-

[29] United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), "Darfur Peace Agreement," May 5, 2006.

[30] Moshe Terdman, "Darfur Peace Agreement: Will It Last?" The Project for Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM), GLORIA Center, *Islam in Africa Newsletter,* Vol. 1, No. 1, May 2006.

fur.[31] The attack had two important strategic objectives. One was to demonstrate the vulnerability of the Sudanese regime. The second was to catalyze a united front of the various Darfur rebels forces against Khartoum. If reports that anti-Khartoum elements of the SLM had lent support to the JEM in its attack on Omdurman, it would mean that two of Darfur's largest rebel groups had joined forces to escalate the conflict.[32] In eastern Sudan, along the Red Sea coast, Beja and Rashaida tribesmen have also been fighting Sudanese government forces.[33] There are reports that eastern rebels are receiving support from Eritrea.[34]

Criminal networks are widespread, taking advantage of corruption and lawlessness throughout the region. The Gulf of Aden and the waters around the Horn of Africa are among the most piracy-prone regions of the continent. Pirates and criminal syndicates are well armed, usually operate within a predetermined and mutually agreed spheres of influence, and engage in everything from looting and ransacking to more-sophisticated hostage taking and hijackings.[35] Members of organized criminal gangs are not only local, but have linkages throughout the region. West African crime groups also have a strong presence in the region. Predominantly run by expatriates from Nigeria, Liberia, and Ghana, these organizations engage in a broad spectrum of criminal activities.[36]

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[31] Andrew McGregor, "Darfur's JEM Rebels Bring the War to Khartoum," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor,* Vol. 6, No. 10, May 15, 2008.

[32] Hussein Solomon, "What the JEM Offensive Means for the Darfur Crisis," Centre for International Political Studies, University of Pretoria, CIPS Electronic Briefing Paper, No. 28, 2008.

[33] Rabasa et al., 2007, p. 192.

[34] Jane's Information Group, "A New Front in Sudan's Eternal War," Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, June 23, 2005.

[35] For an overview of the challenge posed by piracy today, see Peter Chalk, *The Maritime Dimensions of International Security: Terrorism, Piracy, and Challenges for the United States,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-697-AF, 2008.

[36] For this assessment of piracy and crime in East Africa we are indebted to the work of RAND analyst Peter Chalk in Rabasa et al., 2007, Chapter 10.

Finally, it is important to note that some of these alternative power centers are fostered by the ruling groups themselves—who prefer to exercise power through informal channels, as in the case of the Janjaweed militia operating in Darfur at the behest of the Khartoum government.

Prevalence of the Informal Economy

The prevalence of the informal economy refers to the extent to which the informal economy overshadows the formal economy and escapes the control of the state.[37] According to an International Labor Organization study, 50.6 percent of workers in Ethiopia and 36.4 percent in Kenya were employed in the informal sector in 1999. (The proportion is no doubt higher in Somalia).[38] The ratio of informal to total employment is higher for women than for men and is predominant in small-scale enterprises, such as retail commerce, and in the agricultural sector. It also involves a significant amount of cross-border trading).

The informal sector (in some cases institutionalized by corrupt customs, border, and police officials) offers terrorist networks opportunities to launder money, transport funds, and carry out the financial transactions that they need to operate. Throughout the former Somalia, financial transactions are conducted by moneychangers or through the *hawala* system, an informal remittance system in widespread use throughout Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. It is estimated that about $1 billion is sent in remittances to Somalia every year from Somalis abroad.[39]

In the past, hawala transactions left no paper trail; the anonymity of the transactions allowed terrorists and sympathizers to transfer

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[37] Adapted from I. William Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority,* Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

[38] The *informal sector* constitutes workers who are not recognized, recorded, protected, or regulated by the public authorities. International Labour Organization, "Decent Work in the Informal Economy," 2002.

[39] Author interview with UNDP/Somalia official, Nairobi, May 2007.

funds without fear of interdiction. However, since 9/11 central banks in source countries and international organizations have taken steps to increase supervision of hawala transactions. For instance, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is helping hawala companies operating in Somalia develop a self-monitoring system to regulate the transfer of funds in order to comply with anti-terrorism funding regulations in the source countries and prevent the commingling of remittances with terrorist funds.[40]

Porous Borders

State presence in border areas is marginal throughout East Africa, reflecting a general inability of the governments to police the outer reaches of their territories. Kenya's border with Somalia, for instance, is porous and in large part arid and thinly populated, largely by ethnic Somalis. Although there are nominal customs checkpoints at the main Kenyan entry points, the rest of the border is rarely patrolled and there are many smuggling routes.[41] Maritime and coastal surveillance is minimal. The waters adjacent to the Horn of Africa have become one of the most piracy-prone maritime areas in the world. According to the annual report of the International Maritime Bureau, there were 31 reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships off Somalia and 13 in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea in 2007. (Indonesia registered 43 and Nigeria 42.)[42]

During its short reign in Mogadishu, the ICU made some efforts to assert control of the arms traffic. In August 2006, the ICU launched a military attack on pirates at the port of Harardheere (central coast) to retrieve a dhow with a shipment of arms and logistical supplies that

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[40] Author interview with UNDP/Somalia official, Nairobi, May 2007.

[41] Human Rights Watch, *Playing with Fire: Weapons Proliferation, Political Violence, and Human Rights in Kenya,* May 2002.

[42] International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships—Annual Report 2007,* January 2008, Table 1: Location of Actual and Attempted Attacks.

the pirates had seized.[43] After the removal of the ICU from power, piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia spiked, from 10 in 2006 to 31 in 2007.[44]

Widespread Access to Illegal Weapons

Despite a UN arms embargo, according to the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, arms flows to Somalia have been aggressively fed by a growing number of states as well as arms-trading networks. The report stated that Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Libya, Lebanese Hezbollah, Saudi Arabia, and Syria had provided arms, training, and logistical support to the ICU, while Ethiopia, Uganda, and Yemen have provided military assistance to the TFG.[45]

Yemeni arms-trading networks sent large shipments of arms to all sides of the Somalia conflict and to the Puntland administration. Large quantities of many different types of arms routinely passed through the Bakaaraha Arms Supermarket, a network of financially interlinked arms markets in Somalia, with the single largest market in the Bakaaraha market in Mogadishu. After the victory of the ICU over the ARPCT warlord coalition, the Yemeni networks began to ship arms almost exclusively to the ICU. Nevertheless, according to the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, warlords continued to buy increasing numbers of arms and were working through relatives to arrange for clandestine purchases of large-caliber weapons.[46]

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[43] UN Security Council, 2/2006/913, Letter dated 21 November 2006 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council. This report is widely disputed.

[44] International Maritime Bureau, 2008, Table 1.

[45] International Maritime Bureau, 2008. See also UN Security Council, 2/2007/436, "Letter dated 17 July 2007 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council."

[46] UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1676 (2006), October 16, 2006.

Large-scale trafficking in arms is not limited to Somalia, of course. Arms suppliers meet the needs of the various rebel armies in Sudan. According to a Nairobi press report there are 100,000 illegal guns in Kenya.[47] There is reportedly a covert arms market in the Eastleigh area of Nairobi, where many Somalis have settled. Illegal arms are also brought to airfields and trafficked in northwestern Kenya.[48]

Proximity to the Arabian Peninsula

East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula have been bound together by geographic proximity, by religion, and by a long and continuing interrelationship.[49] East Africa was one of the first regions outside of the Arabian Peninsula to be influenced by Islam. Islam was introduced into East Africa through two distinct avenues of access: from the north, as the result of the conquest of Egypt by Arab armies in the seventh century and the advance of Islam down the Nile to the Sudan; and from the east, brought to the Swahili Coast by Muslim traders from the Arabian Peninsula. Geographic proximity and social, cultural, and religious affinities also make East Africa susceptible to infiltration by radical ideologies and personnel from the Middle East. The first government in the Arab world under the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood was established in Sudan in the early 1990s.[50]

Operational Access to Attack Venues

Operational access refers to the idea of reasonably easy access by terrorists to their desired attack venues. This means the existence of infra-

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[47] "Kenya: Illegal Guns—100,000 Reasons to Be Afraid," *The Nation* (Nairobi), March 11, 2007.

[48] Author's discussions with Western diplomatic source, Nairobi, May 2007.

[49] Robert I. Rotberg, *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa,* Cambridge, Mass: World Peace Foundation, 2005, p. 2.

[50] Gabriel R. Warburg, "The Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan: From Reforms to Radicalism," The Project for Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM), GLORIA Center, August 2006.

structure that allows for the terrorists' movement and locations in areas that are in proximity to U.S. or Western targets. Thus, an area that is contiguous to a zone of terrorist operation is more attractive to terrorist groups as a sanctuary than one that is a long distance away or separated by difficult terrain from potential targets.

Although there are few lucrative Western targets in the Horn of Africa, terrorists can and have used safe havens in Somalia to mount strikes against targets both within the region and in nearby states. There are numerous targets of opportunity across southeastern Africa, including diplomatic missions, Western-owned banks and businesses, hotels, and restaurants catering to foreign tourists, international schools, and foreign aid offices.

CHAPTER THREE

The Ethno-Religious Landscape of East Africa

East Africa is divided into several cultural zones: the Arab-Sudanese majority culture of the Sudan; the Christian and animist people of Equatoria and the Great Lakes region of Africa; the majority Coptic Christian Amharic- and Tigrayan-speaking people of Ethiopia's highlands; the ethnic Somali populations of Somaliland, Puntland, Djibouti, southern Somalia, the Ogaden, and parts of Kenya; the Arab-influenced Muslim coastal communities of Kenya and Tanzania; and the majority Christian populations in the highlands of Kenya and Tanzania.

As discussed in the country sections below, Sufism, the traditional "inner-worldly" dimension of Islam, stresses the emotive and personal experiences of the divine and has historically been a major tradition throughout East Africa. Often regarded as "popular Islam," Sufism has a large following and provides an important base of social structure through its orders or brotherhoods *(tariqas)*. Charismatic leadership is often a central component in Sufi practice, and sheikhs of various brotherhoods often establish footholds within the political sector.[1] The main East African Sufi orders are shown in Table 3.1.

In recent decades, Sufism has come under pressure from Salafis and Wahhabis, who seek the "purification" of Islam through a return to the "uncorrupted" form that they believed was practiced in the time of the prophet Muhammad and his companions. Salafis and Wah-

[1] Knut S. Vikør, "Sufi Brotherhoods in Africa," in Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, eds., *The History of Islam in Africa,* Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 441–468.

Table 3.1
Main Sufi Orders in East Africa

Country	Order
Sudan	Qadiriyya Khatmiyya Tijaniyya-Niassiyya
Somalia	Qadiriyya Ahmadiyya-Dandarawiyya Salihiyya
Ethiopia	Qadiriyya Tijaniyya Shaziriyya Semaniyya
Kenya Tanzania	Qadiriyya Shadhiliyya

habis consider many Sufi beliefs and practices to be innovations forbidden by Islam (*bida*). Although Salafism has made inroads among the educated elites, traditional and Sufi practices continue to predominate among the mass of the Muslim population in East Africa.

Salafi movements are found throughout the Muslim world. Some have a strictly religious, nonpolitical agenda. Others have evolved into or influenced the modernist tendency in Islam. Yet others have become radicalized and have given sustenance to violent and terrorist groups. There is a great deal of overlap between conservative Salafis and Wahhabis, but they differ in some important respects. Wahhabism preceded the Salafi movement by some 150 years. (Wahhabis, of course, deny that there are any differences between their doctrines and Islam proper. They consider the term Wahhabi to be pejorative and prefer to be known as *muwahhidun* or Ahl al-Tawhid—"those who uphold the unity of God.") Wahhabism differs from conservative Salafi movements in that, while strict Salafis reject all mazhabs (schools of Islamic jurisprudence), relying on direct interpretation of the Quran and the Sunna, Wahhabis subscribe to the Hanbali school of jurisprudence, the strictest of the four in Sunni Islam. More important, Wahhabism

is closely associated with the house of Saud, although at various times radical Wahhabis have challenged the Saudi government. Although Wahhabism was originally a marginal sect within Islam, Saudi patronage has made it a major influence throughout the Muslim world.[2]

Country Analysis

Sudan

In Sudan, the population is 70 percent Sunni Muslim, 25 percent practitioners of indigenous African religions, and 5 percent Christian.[3] Muslims are concentrated in the northern Arabic-speaking provinces, where they constitute 95 percent of the population. (See Figure 3.1.) Christians and adherents to indigenous religions are a majority in the south. Sufism has deep roots in the Sudan and Sufi orders continue to play an important in the practice of Sudanese Islam. The Khatmiyya order was introduced in Sudan in the early nineteenth century and became regionalized around a central lodge in al-Saniyya in eastern Sudan. In the 1880s, the Khatmiyya came into conflict with the Mahdist movement led by Muhammad Ahmad, the Mahdi of Khartoum fame, who saw the Khatmiyya as a potential source of opposition.[4] Ahmad himself was known for his Sufi and mystical tendencies and was appointed a sheikh in the Semaniyya order before he declared himself to be the Mahdi, or "divinely guided one." (Ahmad claimed the ability to communicate directly with the Prophet Muhammad by means of visions).[5]

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[2] See the analysis of Salafi and Wahhabi movements in Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Benard, Peter Chalk, C. Christine Fair, Theodore W. Karasik, Rollie Lal, Ian O. Lesser, and David E. Thaler, *The Muslim World After 9/11,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-246-AF, 2004.

[3] CIA, "Sudan," *The World Factbook, 2008*.

[4] Vikør, 2000, pp. 457–458.

[5] Aharon Layish, "The Legal Methodology of the Mahdi in the Sudan, 1881–1885," *Sudanic Africa,* Vol. 8, 1997.

Figure 3.1
Map of Islam in East Africa

SOURCE: Central Intelligence Agency (1987).
NOTE: The green-shaded areas denote Muslim-majority areas and the checkered areas are mixed areas.
RAND *MG782-3.1*

After the defeat of the Mahdists in 1898, the Khatmiyya grew considerably and became the dominant Sufi order in Sudan. The Mahdi's followers, known as the Ansar, did not disappear when the Mahdist state was destroyed. Instead, they reemerged as a political movement and provided the backbone of the Umma Party, headed by Mubarak al Fadil al Mahdi, the first cousin of Sadiq al Mahdi, the great-grandson

of the Mahdi and Prime Minister from 1986 to 1989.[6] Another important Sufi current in Sudan is the Tijaniyya Niassiyya, which has grown rapidly since 1950.[7]

The Sudanese Niassiyya is a millennial movement that preaches the imminence of the appearance of the Expected Mahdi and the Last Day. Contrary to Tijani teachings, which allow for freedom for adherents to choose and express political ideas, the Niassiyya is highly centralized and provides political guidance and direction of adherents. Centralization is justified by the need to organize believers for the jihad against infidels that will purify the world and prepared the way for the rule of the Mahdi.[8]

Somalia and Djibouti

Islam is the official state religion of Somalia, and almost 100 percent of the Somali population is Sunni Muslim.[9] Somali Islam is strongly characterized by local traditions and syncretic practices, such as the *duco* (intercessory prayer after salaat in the mosque), the ecstatic *digri* ceremonies, the *siyaaro* or pilgrimages to the tombs of saints (practiced in particular by Sufis), and the celebration of Mawliid (the Prophet Muhammad's birthday). These practices are strongly opposed by Salafis and Wahhabis. [10]

In pre-colonial Somalia, the two sources of law were Somali customary law *(xeer)* and Islamic law *(shari'a)*. If the two contradicted each other, customary law often prevailed. During the colonial period,

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[6] John Voll, "The Eastern Sudan: 1822 to the Present," in Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, eds., *The History of Islam in Africa*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000, p. 155.

[7] Vikør, 2000, p. 458.

[8] Awad al-Sid al-Karsani, "Beyond Sufism: The Case of Millennial Islam in the Sudan," in Louis Brenner, ed., *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa,* Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1994, pp. 139–142.

[9] Timothy L. Gall, ed., *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Culture & Daily Life: Vol. 1—Africa,* Cleveland, Ohio: Eastword Publications Development, 1998, p. 386.

[10] Kenneth J. Menkhaus, "Somalia and Somaliland: Terrorism, Political Islam, and State Collapse," in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences,* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004a, p. 26.

Western law was introduced, and the three legal systems co-existed, each with its own spheres of influence. Siad Barre's secular government attempted to undermine shari'a law. In January 1975, he announced the introduction of a new family law in which women would have the same inheritance rights as men. Some religious scholars who protested were executed. The executions silenced other critics of the regime, but many silently resisted.[11]

Until recently, the strict conservative Wahhabi sect of Islam was largely unknown in Somalia.[12] As more Somalis migrated to the Middle East for work, however, they came into contact with Salafi and Wahhabi interpretations of Islam. On coming back to Somalia, some brought back Wahhabi ideas and animated various underground movements, including what later became AIAI. These movements fostered Islamist ideologies and opposition to the Siad Barre regime, whose Socialist ideology they considered to be foreign and un-Islamic.

In Djibouti and Somaliland, the government requires religious groups to register with government agencies responsible for religious affairs and monitors religious activities. Authorities in both countries oppose what they refer to as "fundamentalism." Djibouti's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments subsidizes both mosques and Christian churches and pays the salaries of imams.[13] Somaliland authorities discourage Wahhabi practices and financially support some 70 mosques, including payment of salaries to influential sheikhs in every major town.[14]

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[11] Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study,* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, 1992.

[12] In the early part of the nineteenth century, an Islamic fundamentalist movement, probably influenced by Wahhabism, developed with its center on the town of Baardheere. The sectarians tried to purge Somali Islam of its syncretic and mystical elements, but their efforts were resisted by the other clans and the town was burned to the ground in 1843. "Islamic Fundamentalism in Somalia," International Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity (IISIC) Bulletin, December 1993/January 1994.

[13] Author's interview with officials in Djibouti, May 2007.

[14] Author's interview with Sheikh Mohamed Ahmed Ali, Director-General of the Ministry of Religion and Endowment of Somaliland, Hargeisa, May 2007.

Authorities in both Djibouti and Hargeisa are concerned about the growth of radicalism in the south. As one Djibouti official noted, there are two million people without a government in southern Somalia and this creates a favorable climate for extremism. People need work, schools, food, and shelter, he said, and anyone who provides services—for instance, Islamist NGOs—can garner popular support.[15]

Sufism has historically been influential in Somalia, as elsewhere in Africa, but its political influence declined in the latter part of the twentieth century. It remains part of the religious landscape in Somalia but not in a highly organized form. The three most prominent Sufi orders in Somalia are the Qadiriyya, the oldest of the Sufi orders; the Ahmadiyya-Dandarawiyya (sometimes associated with the Idrisiyya); and the Salihiyya. The Rifaiyya, an offshoot of the Qadiriyya, is popular mainly among Arabs resident in Mogadishu.[16]

Membership in a Sufi brotherhood is theoretically a voluntary matter unrelated to kinship. However, lineages are often affiliated with specific orders. Each order has its own hierarchy that is supposedly a substitute for the kin group from which the members have separated themselves. Veneration is given to previous heads of the order who, upon their death, are considered saints and whose tombs become pilgrimage centers.[17]

An important Sufi-linked organization is Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ), which seeks to unify the Sufi community and counter the influence of radical groups. ASWJ developed as an offshoot of Majma Ulimadda ee Soomaaliya, an assembly of Islamic scholars that sought to establish a shari'a-based government. ASWJ condemns violence and the practice of *takfir*. (*Takfir* is usually translated as "excommunica-

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15 Author's interview with authorities in Djibouti, May 2007.

16 "Religious Orders and the Cult of the Saints," in Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study,* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, 1992.

17 "Religious Orders and the Cult of the Saints," 1992.

tion"; attitudes toward takfir constitute a major dividing line between mainstream and radical Islam.)[18]

More conservative and orthodox interpretations of Islam and Islamist movements have made important inroads over the past decades. Groups inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood made their appearance in the 1960s but were suppressed under the Siad Barre dictatorship. An example of the Islamist movements that emerged over the past decades is Harakat al-Islah. Al-Islah was established in the 1970s as a network of underground groups. The movement's work focuses on education. It is the dominant force at the University of Mogadishu and other educational institutions and in the Formal Private Education Network in Somalia (FPENS).[19] FPENS, a consortium of Somali schools, is made up of more than 100 schools with 100,000 students (over one-third female) in Mogadishu and other Somali cities that employ over 1,700 teachers and 500 support staff.[20]

While al-Islah professes to adhere to democratic and pluralistic principles, some people doubt al-Islah's commitment to moderation. For instance, an international organization official in Nairobi pointed out that al-Islah has its roots in Sudanese Islamist ideologue Hassan al-Turabi's National Islamic Front (see the section "Radicalization in Sudan"). Moreover, the same source noted that at the first meeting in Khartoum between representatives of the TFG of Somalia and the ICU in June 2006, the ICU sent a delegation that was almost exclusively composed of al-Islah members. The source suspects that there may have been coordination among the nonviolent and the armed

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[18] Anouar Boukhars, "Understanding Somali Islamism," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor,* Vol. 4, No. 10, May 18, 2006.

[19] Boukhars, 2006.

[20] Andre Le Sage, "The Rise of Islamic Charities in Somalia: As Assessment of Impact and Agendas," Paper presented to the 45th Annual International Studies Association Convention, Montreal, March 17–20, 2004. FPENS has a connection to the Islamic Development Bank and provides certification and other services, including scholarships for students to study abroad. See Farah S. Abdikader, "FPENS: Role and Activities," May 2005.

Islamists all along, with al-Islah providing the social services and the AIAI/ICU element the military muscle.[21]

Nonviolent Salafi movements include Salafiyya Jadiida, which opposes the violence and dogmatic theology of the AIAI, and the international Tablighi Jamaat, a proselytizing Islamic movement established in India in 1926 and now the most important Muslim missionary group in Somalia and throughout the Horn of Africa.[22]

Ethiopia and Eritrea

In Ethiopia about half the population are Christians, adherents of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which is part of the Monophysite Coptic branch of Christianity. For centuries, the dominant ethnic group in Ethiopia has been the Amhara, who together with the Tigray constitute about a third of Ethiopia's population. Some 40 percent of Ethiopians are Muslims who live mostly in the lowland regions.[23] Muslims predominate among the Oromos, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, who constitute about 40 percent of Ethiopia's population and live largely in the southern part of the country, and among ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden. Islam is practiced in its traditional form along the Eritrean coast, which has been influenced by Arab populations across the Red Sea, and in Harar. In the interior, stretching southward toward Kenya and Somalia, Muslim religious practices become less formal.[24]

Sufism is the predominant form of Islam practiced in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The most widely propagated *tariqa* (Sufi order) in Ethiopia is the Qadiriyya. Other important tariqas are the Tijanyya, founded by Ahmed Tijiani in the Wore Babo region and Ahmed Oumer in Assosa; the Shaziriyya, founded by Sheikh Ibrahim and Sheikh Debat, who

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[21] Author's interview with international organization official, Nairobi, May 2007.

[22] Boukhars, 2006.

[23] The *CIA World Factbook, 2008* estimates the Muslim population in Ethiopia at 32.8 percent. However, most other estimates are in the range of 50 percent Christian and 40 percent Muslim. See Thomas P. Ofcansky and LaVerle Berry, ed., *Ethiopia: A Country Study,* Washington: U.S. Library of Congress, 1991 and estimates in "Religion by Location: Ethiopia," at Adherents.com.

[24] Ofcansky and Berry, eds., 1991.

fought against the Italians in the 1930s; and the Semaniyya.[25] Ethiopian Islam is characterized by patterns of mutual tolerance and symbiosis with Ethiopia's historically dominant Christian culture. According to anthropologist Jon Abbink, although Ethiopians Muslims have in recent years gone through a phase of revivalism and self-assertion, they have remained largely impervious to fundamentalist ideological movements.[26]

Eritrea, a former Italian colony, was incorporated into Ethiopia in 1952. It gained its independence after the overthrow of the Mengistu government in 1993.[27] The population is almost equally divided between Orthodox Christians, mainly in the highlands closer to the Ethiopian border, and Muslims on the coastal lowlands. Both Eritrean Orthodox Christianity and Islam are officially recognized religions. The Eritrean Orthodox Church was recognized as autocephalous (self-governing) by the Ethiopian Church when Eritrea gained its independence in 1993. Eritrea's governing party, the formerly Marxist Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) is not identified with any particular religion. As a practical matter, the policies of the Eritrean government are driven primarily by hostility to Ethiopia. Consequently, Asmara has provided sanctuary and support to radical Islamist groups in Somalia and the Ogaden, notwithstanding the risks that support for Islamist groups pose to Eritrea itself.[28]

The Swahili Coast

The Swahili Coast—the coastal region of Kenya and Tanzania—lies in the path of the trade winds and could be easily reached by early

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[25] Abiy Solomon, "Sufism in the Ethiopian context," *Ethiopian Reporter,* December 30, 2006.

[26] Jon Abbink, "An Historical-Anthropological Approach to Islam in Ethiopia: Issues of Identity and Politics," *Journal of African Cultural Studies,* Vol. 11, No. 2, December 1998.

[27] Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia by a UN resolution in 1952 and became an Ethiopian province in 1962. Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea catalyzed an independence movement in the 1960s, initially led by the Eritrean Liberation Front and subsequently by the EPLF, which played a major role in the overthrow of the Mengistu regime.

[28] Author's discussions with diplomats and international organization officials in Nairobi, Kenya, and Djibouti, May 2007.

trading ships from the Persian Gulf and points to the east. The ports of Mombasa and Dar es Salaam became the entry point for Islam as well as other cultural influences from Arabia.[29] Arab traders arrived on the East African coast as individuals and married local women. The new culture that developed along with the Swahili language merged Arabic and Persian cultural elements with an indigenous substratum. The Swahili culture that prevails today is dominated by Arabs who arrived originally from the Hadramaut region in present-day Yemen.

In Kenya and Tanzania, the religious environment is complex. Although a majority of the population in these countries adheres to some form of Christianity, traditional African religions are widespread (26 percent in Kenya, 20 percent in Tanzania).[30] There are also a variety of syncretist churches, founded by prophets who reject foreign guidance and emphasize African cultural practices.[31] Muslims are believed to constitute 6 percent of the population in Kenya and about 35 percent in Tanzania. The majority of Muslims in these two countries live near the coast, in Tanzania, or on the offshore islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, which constituted an independent Muslim sultanate until Zanzibar's merger with Tanganyika in 1964 to form the present state of Tanzania. About 60 percent of Kenya's Muslim population lives in the Coast province, which includes the city of Mombasa.[32] The geographic concentration of Swahili-speaking Muslims on the coast provides a density of social networks and an alternative set of international connections to the Persian Gulf that distinguishes this area from the rest of Kenya.[33] In Uganda, some 16 percent of the popula-

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29 Ali A. Mazrui, "Africa and Islamic Civilization: The East African Experience," Keynote address at the International Symposium on Islamic Civilization in East Africa, Kampala, Uganda, December 15–17, 2003.

30 CIA, "Kenya" and "Tanzania," *The World Factbook 2008*.

31 Ali A. Mazrui, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1986, p. 155.

32 Gall, 1998, pp. 448–449. The percentage of Muslims in Kenya's population is disputed. Muslim sources cite a higher number.

33 William Reno's review of monograph.

tion is Muslim,[34] and one of the largest mosques in Africa is about to be opened in Kampala.[35]

In the traditional centers of Swahili culture along the coast, most Muslims adhere to the Shafi'i *mazhab* within Sunni Islam. As Islam expanded into the interior, it coexisted and to some extent fused with tribal religion. In the resulting African-Islamic culture, there is outward conformity with Islam, although social institutions and practices retain much of their traditional form.[36] Later immigration from South Asia introduced new forms of Islamic practices, mainly the Ismaili form of Shi'a Islam and the heterodox Ahmadiyya sect.

Somalis constitute about 20 percent of Kenya's Muslim population. Ten percent are Borana (Oromos), and the rest constitute Muslim minorities within Christian-majority ethnic groups. The Somalis are found in the northeastern districts bordering on Somalia and in Nairobi, where a significant Somali population—mostly immigrants from Somalia—has settled in the ethnically mixed Eastleigh neighborhood.

Muslim-State Relations on the Swahili Coast

The traditional leadership of Muslims in coastal Kenya is dominated by Swahili-speaking Arabs. This group has a strong orientation toward the Middle East and receives funding from the Gulf states. Other Muslim communities do not speak Swahili as a first language and belong to other ethnic groups. These non-Arab Muslims identify primarily as members of their ethnic communities rather than on the basis of religion and are not animated by the type of transnational issues that motivate the Swahili-speaking Arabs. According to Nairobi-based observers, the general orientation of these non-Arab Muslims creates a brake on the spread of radical Islam among non-Arab upcountry Muslims.[37]

The most representative Kenyan Muslim organization is the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims, which has been critical of the

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[34] CIA, "Uganda," *The World Factbook 2008*.

[35] Interview with Nairobi-based journalist, May 2007.

[36] For a discussion of the fusion of Islamic and traditional African cultures in East Africa, see J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa,* Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1964.

[37] Author's interview with Western diplomatic sources, Nairobi, May 2007.

Kenyan government's treatment of Muslims but has generally taken a moderate line. Among the Swahili Arabs, there are organized radical movements that, although vocal, do not represent the majority sentiment of Kenyan Muslims. Among non-Swahili Muslims, the Kenyan Muslim Youth Alliance, composed of more than 150 community youth-based organizations, is seeking to build a grassroots youth structure that provide an alternative to radical groups.[38] That said, there is dissatisfaction among some sectors of the Muslim community over discriminatory treatment by the central government that could become a factor of radicalization. Muslims often experience difficulties obtaining passports and identity documents. Moreover, Kenya's national identity is bound with Christianity, and official functions reflect this fact.[39]

After the terrorist attacks in Kenya in 1998 and 2002, there were complaints of alleged targeting of Muslims in connection with the war on terrorism. Muslim groups demanded the disbandment of the Anti-Terror Police Unit, established in 2003 to monitor militant activities. They also demanded the release of individuals deported to Somalia because of their alleged connections to the ICU (the government claimed these individuals were Somalis, but their supporters maintained that some were Kenyan citizens) and protested the rendition of an alleged terrorist to the United States.[40] The political crisis and resulting violence in Kenya at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008 between supporters of President Mwai Kibaki, from the majority Kikuyu tribe, and backers of challenger Raila Odinga, from the Luo tribe, did not break along religious lines. During the presidential campaign, Muslim groups actively pressed their agenda with both Kibaki and Odinga and have gained greater political influence. Muslims hold

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[38] Author's interview with Hassan K. Ole Naado, Chairman, Kenyan Muslim Youth Alliance, Nairobi, May 2007. The Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance Web site is http://www.kenyamuslims.org.

[39] Author's interview with Western diplomatic sources, Nairobi, May 2007.

[40] Abdul Malik Muhammad, a Kenyan Muslim suspected of being involved in the bombing of the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa, was reportedly handed over to U.S. authorities. Terdman, "The Effects of the Somali Crisis on Kenyan Muslims," The Project for Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM), GLORIA Center, Islam in Africa Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 2007b.

six Cabinet positions and seven assistant minister posts in the coalition government organized in April 2008, including the important position of Minister of Northern Kenya Development, established to improve the standard of living in the northern region where nomadic Muslim communities constitute the majority of the population.[41]

In Muslim-majority Zanzibar, there is a growing interest in independence, or at least in achieving greater autonomy within Tanzania. Zanzibar is becoming more religious and conservative—a trend observed throughout all of the Muslim parts of East Africa. Muslim religious scholars, or *ulema,* are very influential in setting rules of social behavior—for instance, enforcing the dress code and trying to close down bars that serve alcohol, despite the detrimental effect on tourism. According to a Nairobi-based journalist, a strong moderate Muslim leadership is missing. Moderates appear to be intimidated by the Islamists, who are making headway in moving the society toward their presumed goal of an Islamic state.[42]

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[41] "Muslims in the Grand Coalition Government," *The New Dawn,* Nairobi, Vol. 1, No. 8, May 2–June 1, 2008. In this power-sharing arrangement, Kibaki remained as president and Odinga became prime minister.

[42] Author's interview with Nairobi-based correspondent, May 2007. However, one of the reviewers of this monograph, Peter Chalk, believes that this portrayal of Zanzibar as becoming more conservative is overstated. He notes that the island remains very much open to the world and willing to cater to Western lifestyles in its efforts to promote tourism.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Growth of Radical Islam

The growth of radical Islam in East Africa in recent decades has manifested itself in the spread of Salafi and Wahhabi ideologies, which has put pressure on traditional and Sufi practices, and in the emergence of extremist and terrorist groups influenced by these ideologies. The development of radical Islam is due to the confluence of a number of socio-political factors—some of them at work in the Muslim world at large and others specific to the East African region. In the external categories are the following: the effects of the worldwide Islamic revival of the last several decades, the influence of international Islamist organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the export of Saudi funds and ideology, the impact of the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the spread of international radical Islamist networks.

All of these developments originated outside East Africa, but they had strong reverberations in East Africa because of the region's geographic and cultural proximity to the Middle East. Internal dynamics that contributed to the growth of radical Islamism included the growth of domestic Islamist movements; Muslim reaction to perceived threats to Islam, Christian missionary activity in particular; and such political events as the Islamist-military coup in Sudan in 1989, the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, and the onset of the U.S.-led global war on terrorism.

The extension of the global war on terrorism to Africa had a variety of important effects. These included the expansion of U.S. counterterrorism programs in the region, as well as the U.S. military footprint, through the establishment of the CJTF-HOA in Djibouti; the

alignment of a number of regional states with the United States in the war on terror; and the intensification of efforts by radical Islamists to present U.S. counterterrorism efforts and the invasion of Iraq as a war against Islam and to mobilize Muslims against the United States and its allies.

Ideological Infiltration

Ideological competition within East African Islam manifests itself as a struggle between the traditional Sufi Islam and Salafi and Wahhabi interpretations of Islam. In areas where Wahhabis have asserted themselves, tombs of Sufi sheikhs have been desecrated and traditional practices have been supplanted by Wahhabi norms. As elsewhere in the Muslim world, the Muslim Brotherhood has been a major vector for the propagation of the political expression of Salafism. The Brotherhood's long-term agenda is the creation of an Islamic order (*al-nizam al-islami*), following the hierarchy of objectives prescribed by the Brotherhood's founder, Hassan al-Banna: building the Muslim individual, the Muslim family, the Muslim society, the Muslim government, the Muslim state, and ultimately the Caliphate.[1]

Since its founding in Egypt in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood has evolved through a series of stages in response to changes in its political environment and has generated branches throughout the world. The Muslim Brotherhood has taken different forms in East Africa, from the militant Islamist form of Hasan al-Turabi's National Islamic Front (NIF) in Sudan, to the ostensibly modernist and nonviolent al-Islah movement in Somalia.[2] In the 1940s, Sudanese students in Cairo founded their own branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and were sent by the Egyptian movement to recruit members in Sudan. The Sudanese branch was officially established in 1954.[3] The Brotherhood has

[1] Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 232–236.

[2] For a benign assessment of al-Islah, see Menkhaus, 2004a, pp. 33–34.

[3] Warburg, 2006.

been active in Sudan since its formation there in 1949. Its objective in Sudan has been to institutionalize Islamic law throughout the country, working first with the al-Nimeiri government in the 1970s and subsequently through the Islamist-military regime established after al-Nimeiri's overthrow in 1989. (See the discussion in "Radicalization in Sudan," below.)

Also influential in shaping contemporary Islam in East Africa is Tablighi Jamaat, a worldwide Muslim revivalist movement founded in India in 1927. Tablighi Jamaat has made significant inroads throughout East Africa. Although Tablighi Jamaat is spiritually focused and apolitical, after 9/11 some militant organizations have leveraged the broad reach of the organization for recruiting and networking purposes. In Somalia, the Tablighi leadership insists that it subscribes to a doctrine of nonviolence that distinguishes it from the terrorist organization AIAI.[4]

Islamic Charities

Islamic charities have played an important role in the spread of radical Islam in East Africa. There are, of course, different categories of Islamic NGOs. Some provide relief and humanitarian assistance. Others are engaged in long-term development activities. Some are involved in *da'wa* (literally, "the call," Islamic missionary activity). And yet others have been used as vehicles to spread political Islam or to support militant groups.[5] Some Islamic NGOs have raised concerns around Christian evangelization to build a new conspiracy theory against Islam, presenting themselves as a bulwark against the perceived expansionism of both confessional and secular Western NGOs.[6]

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[4] Menkhaus, 2004a, p. 34.

[5] M. A. Mohamed Salih, "Islamic NGOs in Africa: The Promise and Peril of Islamic Voluntarism," in Alex de Waal, ed., *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004, pp. 146–147.

[6] Abdel-Rahman Ghandour, "Humanitarianism, Islam and the West: Contest or Cooperation?" Humanitarian Practice Network, no date.

In Sudan, where the NIF government undertook a comprehensive program of Islamization in the 1990s, the state supported the work of Islamic NGOs by providing them with resources that, in turn, the Islamic NGOs distributed among poor Muslims or potential converts.[7] In Somalia and other areas where there was a collapse of state institutions, these charities were left as the main providers of health care, primary and secondary education, vocational training, orphanages, and other social services, as well as Islamic instruction.

A key question is to what extent outside NGOs build upon existing Islamic institutions to advance their activities, or whether they compete with or displace traditional institutions. As the reviewer of this manuscript noted, this is a more important question in places where economic and social problems might make it harder for locals to object to the agenda of foreigners who bring them aid.[8] In this regard, although the majority of Muslims in the Horn of Africa are adherents of traditional or Sufi Islam, the version of the religion emphasized by transnational Islamic NGOs is the Salafi or Wahhabi version propagated in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states, Its adherents seek to purify, as they see it, the practice of Islam by eradicating the veneration of holy persons typical of Sufi Islam and by imposing the wearing of the Arab-style female headscarf. They attempt to transform society through education, radio and television shows, summer camps and programs, and publications.[9]

The activities of these NGOs have also given rise to a rival, Arabic-speaking elite that competes with the traditional Sufi leadership. These

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7 Salih, 2004, p. 155.

8 William Reno, review of monograph.

9 Moshe Terdman and Reuven Paz, "Islamization and Da'wah in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of the African Muslim Agency (AMA)," The Project for Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM), GLORIA Center, African Occasional Papers, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 2007; Ousmane Kane, "Moderate Revivalists: Islamic Inroads in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Harvard International Review,* Vol. 29, No. 2, Summer 2007. For how local forms of Islam in Zanzibar are being challenged by "modern" revivalist Islam, see Simon Turner, "'These Young Men Show No Respect for Local Customs': Globalization, Youth and Islamic Revival in Zanzibar," Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS Working Paper No. 2008/4, 2008.

organizations appeal to young Muslims, particularly in the urban areas, who are looking for more dynamic and "modern" organizations that provide outreach, commercial opportunities, and salvation.[10] Mohamed Salih notes that the parallel expansion of African Islamic NGOs and the Muslim Brotherhood is not a coincidence. Muslim Brotherhood organizations are capable of exploiting modern institutional and organizational frameworks and adapting them to their needs.[11]

Organized Islamic charities were not an important factor in Somalia prior to the civil war. Under the Siad Barre dictatorship, the activities of these charities were strictly controlled. After the downfall of Siad Barre's government and during the chaos that followed, a large number of Middle East–based Islamic charities opened offices in Somalia and gained significant influence over the society.[12]

Some of these charities have played a critical role in rebuilding Somali civil society institutions and, as a result, garnered a great deal of goodwill among the population. However, there is another, darker side to the work of some of them. Some charities proselytize and promote and Arab-Islamist curriculum, engage in political activism, and advocate Somalia's transformation into a strict Islamic state.[13] The Khartoum-based charity Munazzama al-Dawa al-Islamiyya, for instance, which reportedly operates in 17 African countries, was said to be part of a wider Sudanese NIF strategy of Islamizing all aspects of society.[14] By providing social services, these radical charities foster the acceptance of Salafi or Wahhabi ideologies by local populations. In some cases, they legitimize extremist organizations, strengthen political support for them, and facilitate recruitment.

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[10] William Reno, review of monograph.

[11] Salih, 2004, p. 162.

[12] Most Islamic charities in Somalia are staffed exclusively by Somali nationals. Although these charities profess to be against "clanism," in fact, their staffs in Mogadishu are drawn predominantly from the dominant Hawiye clan. Le Sage, 2004.

[13] International Crisis Group (ICG), "Somalia: Countering Terrorism in a Failed State," Nairobi/Brussels, ICG Africa Report No. 45, May 23, 2002.

[14] Alex de Waal, *Food and Power in Sudan: A Critique of Humanitarianism,* London: African Rights, 1997, p. 213.

Islamic NGOs receive funding from both individual donors and governments in the Middle East. These NGOs are predominantly involved in the education sector and emergency and relief work, and they provide services in line with their understanding of Islamic doctrine. In Mogadishu alone, Islamic charities manage or support three universities, a management training institute, two hospitals, and numerous schools. Together, these institutions enroll more than 100,000 students.[15] Nearly all these NGOs are headed and staffed by Somalis. One important thing to note is that, unlike western NGOs, Islamic charities do not have the same stringent financial control requirements, although some Gulf countries are now increasing their supervision of projects that they fund. Some charities fund projects partially and expect the community that is served to come up with the rest of the funding.[16] There is also cooperation between Western and Islamic charities. This cooperation is manifested, for instance, in the effort launched by Oxfam/NOVIB to improve relations with some of the key Islamic charities, particularly in the education sector.[17]

Major international Islamic NGOs active in Somalia are shown in Table 4.1.

Catalytic Events: The Islamist-Military Coup in Sudan and the Collapse of the Somali State

The growth of radical Islam in East Africa was accelerated by domestic developments that we refer to as *catalytic events* because they propelled the countries that experienced them into new trajectories. These catalytic events were the 1989 military coup in Sudan that brought to power a military-Islamist regime and the collapse of the Siad Barre dictatorship in Somalia in 1991. Both developments, in different ways, opened up political space that was exploited by radical Islamist movements.

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15 ICG, "Somalia's Islamists," Africa Report No. 100, December 12, 2005b, p. 22.

16 Le Sage, 2004; ICG, 2005b.

17 Private communication from Andre Le Sage, November 22, 2006.

Table 4.1
Main Islamic Charities Operating in Somalia

Headquarters	Charity	Projects
UAE	Crescent Welfare Society Schools	Education: It is a member of the member of FPENS
Kuwait	Africa Muslims Agency (AMA)[a]	Health and Education: AMA receives funding from the World Health Organization (WHO) and runs projects related to health through mobile outreach clinics in various regions including Hiiraan, Gedo, and Middle and Lower Jubba.[b] AMA is also active in the educational sector, through their support of the Somali Institute for Management Administration and Development (SIMAD)[c]
Kuwait	Africa Relief Committee (ARC)	Education: ARC runs schools in several regions within Somalia, including Benadir, Hiiraan, and Puntland. They also finance and run SIMAD
Saudi Arabia	World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY)[d]	Education and Youth: WAMY funds projects related to informal education, camping, and sports and offers scholarships to some low-income students. Through funding from the Islamic Development Bank, WAMY has also been active in supporting curriculum development for schools throughout Somalia by republishing old government textbooks. It translates textbooks from Arabic into Somali
Saudi Arabia	Muslim World League/ International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO)	Mosque construction, orphanages, water/sanitation, nutrition projects
Saudi Arabia	Al-Haramain[e] (closed May 2003)	Mosque construction, Quranic schools, orphanages
Sudan	Munazzamat al-Dawa al-Islamiyya	Islamic education, health, orphanages
Sudan	Mundama Duwa	Islamic education
United Kingdom	Ummah Welfare Trust[f]	Food relief, water-boring rigs

Table 4.1—continued

Headquarters	Charity	Projects
United States	Islamic Relief USA[g]	Health, water and sanitation, education, assistance to internally displaced persons, orphan support, and seasonal and emergency humanitarian relief

SOURCES: Le Sage, 2004; Salih, 2004; ICG, 2005b; the organizations' Web sites as referenced below; and information developed in RAND research.

[a] Africa Muslim Agency's Web site, 2007.

[b] "World Health Organization, "WHO/EHA Situation Report: Flood in South/Central Zone, Somalia," 2006.

[c] ICG, 2005b. SIMAD offers diploma courses in management, accounting, information technology, business administration, and English. SIMAD's Web site is at http://www.simadsom.org/

[d] The WAMY Web site is at http://www.wamy.org/

[e] Named as a Specially Designated Terrorist Organization Entity by the U.S. Government.

[f] Ummah Welfare Trust, Charity Projects in Somalia, at http://www.uwt.org/Countries/Somalia_Charity.asp

[g] Islamic Relief USA, Somalia Humanitarian Crisis, http://www.irw.org/campaigns/somalia

Radicalization in Sudan

In the early 1990s, General Omar al-Bashir's military regime, under the ideological influence of Hassan al-Turabi and the NIF, became the first beachhead of radical Islamism in Africa and a sponsor of international terrorism. The transformation of Sudan into an Islamist-controlled state was the outcome of the work of the Sudanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in the two decades preceding the Islamist-military coup of June 1989. In the 1970s, al-Turabi's Islamists gained control of Sudan's Islamic banking system, first through its connections to Saudi Arabia and afterwards through collaboration with Sudan's military dictator, President Jaafar Numeiri, and greatly expanded their influence over key sectors of the economy, the universities, and the military.[18]

[18] In 1977, Islamists were put in charge of courses in Islamic education and instruction for senior army officers, enabling them to infiltrate the officer corps. Warburg, 2006.

Al-Turabi's project of Islamizing Sudan represented a departure from the experience of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which had informed the activities of the Sudanese Islamist movement in its early days. The Egyptian Muslim Brothers model has generally pursued a gradualist or evolutionary approach, emphasizing education *(tarbiyya),* missionary work (da'wa), and the gradual Islamization of society as a precondition for the establishment of the Islamic state. Revolutionary Islamists, including the Sudanese group, reversed this sequence. For them, the Islamization of the society should be accomplished through the systematic exercise of state power.[19]

The Sudanese military-Islamist regime's ideological project centered on a reeducation campaign, implemented through the educational system, to spread a Salafi interpretation of Islam beyond the intellectual and professional circles where it had originally taken root. The regime also sought to spread its ideology internationally. In the early 1990s, Khartoum became an international center of Islamist radicalism. Al-Turabi organized the Popular Arab and Islamic Conference (PAIC), with the goal of coordinating all anti-imperialist movements in the Muslim world and leading them toward the establishment of Islamic states.[20] The PAIC met in Khartoum in 1991, 1993, and 1995. At the 1991 meeting, a Sunni Islamist revolutionary international was created, the Popular International Organization, as a counterweight to the mainstream Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).[21]

Although the Sudanese Islamists are Sunni and ideologically opposed to Shi'a Islam, the Khartoum regime concluded a strategic partnership with Iran and emerged as the strategic outpost for Iran's export of the Islamic revolution to Africa.[22] In a 1991 visit to Khartoum, Iranian president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani hailed Sudan as "the

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[19] Abdullahi A. Gallab, "The Insecure Rendezvous Between Islam and Totalitarianism: The Failure of the Islamist State in the Sudan," *Arab Studies Quarterly,* Spring 2001.

[20] Warburg, 2006.

[21] Statement by Ronald Sandee, Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., August 6, 2004.

[22] The partnership was based on pan-Islamist ideology and allowed the NIF and element of the government of Iran to work together against the United States, Israel, and other Western

vanguard of the Islamic revolution in the African continent." Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and Hezbollah personnel were deployed to Sudan to train the Sudanese paramilitary Popular Defense Force and foreign militants. The terrorist organizations Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) and al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad were all represented in Khartoum in the heyday of al-Bashir's partnership with al-Turabi. The Sudanese regime also invited bin Laden and several dozen "Afghan Arabs" to settle in Sudan.[23]

According to Khalid Khaleel Asaad's biography of bin Laden, bin Laden paid $5,000 to become a Consultative Member of the NIF and married al-Turabi's sister, Maha. The Sudanese granted bin Laden access to all Sudanese government officials and the business elite. He was given an exemption from import duties and offered a Sudanese diplomatic passport. Asaad states that bin Laden established 23 training camps in Sudan. In return, bin Laden undertook to complete a series of construction projects that Arab governments had left uncompleted and provided tens of millions of dollars in emergency assistance to the Sudanese government.[24]

What led to bin Laden's expulsion from Sudan in 1996 was a confluence of domestic and international factors: a power struggle within the Khartoum government between al-Bashir and al-Turabi and Sudan's international isolation following the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995, in which Sudanese officials were implicated.[25] The falling out between al-Bashir and al-Turabi was driven by competition for political leadership of Sudan. In 1999, al-Bashir dissolved parliament, al-Turabi's power base, and removed the latter's followers from positions of power. Since

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countries. Douglas Farah, "The Role of Sudan in Islamist Terrorism: A Case Study," International Assessment and Strategy Center, April 13, 2007.

[23] Sandee, 2004.

[24] A synopsis and assessment of Asaad's biography of bin Laden can be found in LCDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, USN, "Book Provides Additional Insight into Bin Laden," *Infantry,* March–April 2007.

[25] Author's interview with international organization official, Nairobi, May 2007.

then, al-Turabi and his supporters have been operating in opposition to al-Bashir. Al-Turabi, now speaks of the "failed NIF experiment" and accuses the Sudanese government of atrocities and gross human rights violations. He insists on the need for democracy (albeit Islamist-style) and stresses that Islam and democracy are not incompatible.[26]

In purging al-Turabi, al-Bashir also dropped the most extreme policies associated with the earlier phase of his government, for which the Khartoum government had come under pressure from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. (The United States placed Sudan on its list of state sponsors of terrorism in August 1993 and closed down its embassy in Khartoum in February 1996.) Khartoum dropped its support for the spread of radical Islamism abroad and shut down the activities that supported that vision. The offices of a number of radical Islamist organizations were closed and foreign radicals were asked to leave.[27] The al-Bashir government began to develop a more open economy through an International Monetary Fund structural reform program initiated in 1997. The development of the oil-export industry has led to substantial shifts in the economic structure. Oil exports now account for over 70 percent of Sudan's export earnings (with China as Sudan's main customer) and have significantly boosted state income. Sudan has followed the economic reform program closely in recent years. Fiscal discipline was restored, and the government has promised to accelerate the privatization process.[28]

Khartoum also began to look for an alternative Islamic political system. Government-sponsored researchers looked at Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Iran as possible models. Sudan's 1998 constitution did not specify a state religion and set no religious criteria for

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[26] "Hassan Al-Turabi: Remaking History," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online,* May 11–17, 2006.

[27] de Waal, 2004, pp. 214–229.

[28] Institute for Security Studies (ISS), "Sudan: Economy," 2005. China bought 64 percent of Sudan's crude oil in 2005, accounting for over 50 percent of the country's total exports. JPMorgan Chase Bank, Economic Research Note, "Africa: A Bull Market as China Shops," September 14, 2007. JPMorgan Chase Bank notes that China's share of Sudan's exports has probably risen even further, given the higher price of oil and soaring Sudanese production.

elected office.[29] The July 9, 2005, Interim National Constitution provides for freedom of religion throughout the entire country, but, as the U.S. State Department's *International Religious Freedom Report 2006* notes, regional distinctions in the constitution, negotiated as part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, have resulted in disparities in the treatment of religious minorities in the north and south. Whereas the government of southern Sudan generally respected the rights of Christians and Muslims, the central government continued to discriminate against Christians in the north.[30]

At present, the Sudanese political system is in transition. The peace agreement with the south has set Sudan on a new course involving federalism and revenue sharing between the center and the south. Although the central government currently refuses to countenance a federal solution for western Sudan, regional observers believe that a solution for the Darfur problem may be contained in a new agreement with the south allowing for a greater degree of decentralization.[31]

The deal between the central government and the south, however, came under stress in the fall of 2007, leaving its full implementation in question. On October 11, 2007, the SPLM suspended its participation in the government of national unity in Khartoum and withdrew its 18 ministers. The SPLM grievances include the initial refusal of President al-Bashir to let it reshuffle its ministers in the national government (al-Bashir subsequently relented) and the central government's failure to replace northern troops in the south with a joint command of northern and southern forces, as required by the peace agreement. The deeper disputes relate to the sharing of power and oil income.[32]

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[29] The European Sudanese Public Affairs Council, "Religion in Sudan," June 11, 2002.

[30] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006,* Sudan.

[31] Interview with international organization official in Nairobi, May 2007. The current agreement allows for an independence referendum for the south in 2011, but the south could settle for a more decentralized system within a unified Sudan.

[32] "South Sudan: Will the War Start All Over Again?" *The Economist,* October 18, 2007.

Sudan Counterterrorism Posture After 9/11

After 9/11, the Sudanese government developed unprecedented cooperation with the United States on counterterrorism. Khartoum is now closely aligned with the United States in the campaign against international terrorism, although the Sudanese government's responsibility for mass-scale violence in Darfur has strained relations between the two countries. Sudanese security forces have deported suspected foreign terrorists to their countries of origin and reportedly handed to the United States files with photographs of most of the al-Qaeda and EIJ leaders previously based in Khartoum. Sudan's counterterrorism cooperation with the United States provoked an attack on the Sudanese government by al-Qaeda's second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, in a taped broadcast by Al-Jazeera on June 17, 2005.[33] According to U.S. officials, cited in a *Los Angeles Times* story, Sudan has assembled a network of informants in Iraq that provides intelligence on the insurgency. The improved intelligence relationship between the United States and Sudan was highlighted by the visit to Washington of Sudan's intelligence chief, Salah Abdallah Gosh, in April 2005—a visit criticized by human rights advocates because of Gosh's role in the state-sponsored violence in Darfur.[34]

The Darfur region has been wracked by an ongoing civil conflict since 2003 that pits Khartoum-backed irregulars known as "Janjaweed," recruited mostly from the Arab Baggara tribes, against local Muslim groups opposed to the government's policy of "Arabizing" the area. Resistance to Khartoum is led by the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and JEM, and is backed by three non-Arab peoples—the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa. The conflict has left much of Darfur in a state of anarchy.[35] Since December 2006, the UN-supported African Union Mission has been conducting a monitoring mission in Darfur. However, the Khartoum government has yet to

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[33] "Al-Qaida Said Angry at Sudan for Passing Data to US," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), June 18, 2005, found in Jihad Watch, June 20, 2005.

[34] Greg Miller and Josh Meyer, "U.S. Relies on Sudan Despite Condemning It," *Los Angeles Times,* June 11, 2007.

[35] Jane's Information Group, *Sudan Country Report*, 2004.

commit to implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1706 of August 21, 2006, that calls for a "hybrid" peacekeeping force commanded by the UN.[36]

Within Sudan proper, according to an anonymous article published in jihadi forums, the Salafi infrastructure includes several groups:

- Jama'at Ansar al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, which is divided into two factions. One, associated with the al-Hudayah clan, is pro-regime; another, associated with the Abu Zayd clan, has declined to support the government
- Jami'at al-Kitabah Wal-Sunnah al-Khayriyyah (apparently, as the name suggests, associated with a Sufi tariqa)
- al-Salafiyyun, based in the al-Safiyyah quarter of Khartoum
- a number of sheikhs or Salafi religious scholars not associated with any specific group.

Moshe Terdman, who has written extensively about radical Islam in Africa, notes that little is known about these groups, but that they were most likely formed while bin Laden was in Sudan, or in the 1990s or 2000s, and that they were formed as a result of influences from Saudi Arabia penetrating Sudan from across the Red Sea.[37]

The al-Qaeda Organization in Sudan and Africa, headed by Sheikh Abu Ya'li, claimed responsibility for the September 2006 beheadings of the chief editor of the independent Sudanese daily *al-Wifaq*, and Muhammad Taha, a pro-Iranian Islamist who had offended Islamists by republishing an Internet article that questioned the Prophet Muhammad's ancestry. Taha's assassination was the first terrorist act in Sudan's history involving a beheading in the Iraqi jihadi style.[38] (It is uncertain what relationship, if any, Ya'li's group has to the real al-Qaeda.) On New Year's Day, 2008, American diplomat John Granville and his Sudanese driver were killed in Khartoum while driving home from

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[36] Terdman, 2007a.

[37] Terdman, 2007a.

[38] Terdman, 2007a.

a party. A hitherto unknown group named Ansar al-Tawhid claimed responsibility for the assassinations.[39]

Somalia: Al-Ittihad al-Islami

Until the rise of radical elements associated with the ICU movement in 2006, Islamist violence in the Horn of Africa was synonymous with AIAI, a movement active in the 1980s and 1990s. AIAI was established in the early 1980s through the merger of Somali Salafi irredentist groups opposed to the dictatorship of Siad Barre. AIAI's links to al-Qaeda during this period are unclear, although the group is believed to have received funding and training from al-Qaeda.[40]

AIAI gained strength in the early 1990s after the collapse of the Siad Barre regime.[41] By the end of the decade the group had gained a significant domestic following, largely by offering employment and social services in a country bereft of any real government. AIAI managed to further strengthen its position both by establishing links with successful Somali businessmen and by creating its own enterprises in the areas of banking, telecommunications, export-import, and religious instruction.[42]

AIAI initially had its main base of operations in Puntland, the self-declared autonomous province on the tip of the Horn of Africa between Somaliland and southern Somalia. A branch of AIAI, which initially disguised its relationship to the group, gained control of Bossaso, the main port of Puntland, in spring 1991, having been driven out of southern Somalia by forces loyal to Mogadishu warlord

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[39] "Sudanese Extremist Group Claims Killing of US Diplomat," *Sudan Tribune,* May 5, 2008.

[40] Combating Terrorism Center, Appendix A.I, Somalia's al-Ittihad al-Islami, 2006a. The group was placed on the Terrorist Exclusion List in December 2001.

[41] U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002,* p. 127; Shinn, 2002.

[42] Shinn, 2002; Walter Kansteiner, "Weak States and Terrorism in Africa: U.S. Policy Options in Somalia," Testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, Washington, D.C., February 6, 2002; Ted Dagne, *Africa and the War on Terrorism,* Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, January 17, 2002.

Mohamed Farah Aideed. After establishing itself in Puntland, AIAI gradually began to take control of ports and other facilities and used port revenues to purchase arms, recruit militants, and invite sympathizers from other parts of Somalia and abroad to join its militia.

From its base in Bossaso, the AIAI, led by Sheikh Ali Warsame, a member of the Habr Je'lo subclan of the Isaaq clan, along with his second in command (and brother-in-law) Hassan Dahir Aweys (later deputy chairman of the ICU), a member of the Ayr branch of the Habar Gedir subclan of the Hawiye, tried to extend its control to the rest of Puntland (then known as northeast Somalia). At that point the AIAI came into conflict with the region's liberation movement, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front, an organization established in 1981 by several officers opposed to the Siad Barre regime with a power base in the Majerteen clan. (The military chief of the SSDF was Abdullahi Yusuf, subsequently president of Puntland and currently president of the Somali Transitional Federal Government).[43]

Because the two top AIAI positions were occupied by an Isaaq and a Hawiye, respectively, Yusuf, a member of Puntland's dominant Darood clan, demanded that the AIAI leaders leave Puntland and go back to their local lands.[44] Since Aideed's United Somali Congress (whose membership was entirely Hawiye) was also invading Puntland from the south, Puntland's dominant Darood clan came to see the AIAI power play as a Hawiye conspiracy.

A revolt in Bossaso deprived the AIAI of its main source of revenue, and the AIAI gradually lost strength and retreated to the port city of Las Qorey in Somaliland.[45] Yusuf subsequently allowed some of the Puntland clansmen associated with AIAI to return to Puntland on condition that they stay out of politics. These individuals are economi-

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[43] Interview with Puntland expert on international organization staff, Nairobi, May 2007. See also "Majeerteen Insurgency in Somalia 1978–1986," Armed Conflict Events Data, OnWar.com, December 2000.

[44] In reality, the majority of AIAI members were Darood and a significant portion were members of Puntland's Majerteen clan.

[45] Interview with Puntland expert.

cally influential and proselytize through the provision of education and social services.[46]

AIAI also tried to establish a new base in the Gedo region of southern Somalia, bordering on Kenya and the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Initially, the AIAI directed its attacks against Ethiopian forces, as well as other Somali factions, but it is suspected of attacks on U.S. and Western targets as well.[47] The group sustained significant losses at the hands of the Ethiopian military in 1996 and 1997 and according to some sources many of its members abandoned the armed struggle.[48]

Although the AIAI maintained a low profile after its losses in the clashes with Ethiopian forces in the mid- to late 1990s, some AIAI elements reinvented themselves as part of the ICU that took control of Mogadishu in the summer of 2006. In mid-2006, Sheikh Ali Warsame, the founder of AIAI (who is based in Bur'o, Somaliland), reportedly sent $250,000 to the courts.[49] Western sources suspect that AIAI has been used as a conduit for the creation of a loosely based network of militants stretching from Somalia to Tanzania.[50]

The Rise of the Islamic Courts Union

The first Islamic court was set up in Mogadishu in 1993 in the Medina district of Mogadishu by Sheikh Ali Dheere. Although the courts shared the common "Islamic" banner, they were not interchangeable and their control was limited to specific neighborhoods. Since both their services and rulings were exclusive to the clan or subclan that controlled each court, they formed a loose federation. The second court was set up in

[46] Kenneth J. Menkhaus, "Political Islam in Somalia" *Middle East Policy,* Vol. 9, No. 1, March 2002.

[47] There are allegations that the group had a role in the infamous "Black Hawk Down" incident in Mogadishu. Bin Laden stated that al-Qaeda was directly involved in the Mogadishu incident. Informed commentators have cast doubt on these claims however, not least because they were made a full three years after Aideed's militia clashed with U.S. forces. See Shinn, 2002.

[48] David Shinn, cited in Khalil Gebara, "Al-Qaeda's Threat to Ethiopia," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor,* Vol. 3, No. 3, February 5, 2005.

[49] Author's interview with international organization official, Nairobi, May 2007.

[50] Peter Chalk's discussion of AIAI in Rabasa et al., 2006, p. 132.

North Mogadishu by the Abgaal subclan and became infamous for its harsh punishments, including hand amputations.[51]

The initial success of the courts led other subclans to follow in their footsteps. In 1996, the Hawadle subclan established an Islamic court in Baladweyne, Hiiraan, in central Somalia. The aforementioned Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys established two Islamic courts in 1998, the Ifka Halane in Mogadishu and another one in Merka, southern Somalia. The courts received support from some businessmen and maintained a militia, which was mostly regarded as disciplined and contributed to stability in the areas that the courts controlled.[52]

As the number of courts increased, a Shari'a Implementation Council with 63 members was formed, with Sheikh Ali Dheere as chairman and Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys as secretary general. In 2004, another court organization with a membership of ten courts was formed, and Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was elected chairman. Each court donated 80 militia members and three to five "technicals"—the armored plated pick-up trucks armed with crew-served weapons that served as the Somali militias' main combat vehicle—to the courts' combined military component.[53]

The ICU's Relationship to the AIAI

Although the AIAI and the ICU were distinct organizations, to some extent the ICU grew out of the AIAI, sharing many of its goals and ideological characteristics.[54] Some key leaders associated with the radical sectors of the ICU had their roots in the AIAI. This radical element within the courts, led by ICU Deputy Chairman Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, was able to gain control of the ICU security apparatus. The radicals' main tool was the Shabaab, the youth section of the ICU, led by Aweys' protégé, Adan Hashi Ayro. Ayro (killed in a U.S. air strike on May 1, 2008), a member of the Ayr branch of the Habr Gedir sub-

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[51] ICG, 2005b.

[52] ICG, 2005b.

[53] ICG, 2005b.

[54] Sunguta West, "Somalia's ICU and Its Roots in al-Ittihad al-Islami," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor,* Vol. 4, No. 15, July 27, 2006.

clan of the Hawiye, lacked any religious training or credentials but was thought to have received military training in Afghanistan prior to 2001 and was appointed militia commander for the Ifka Halane court. He was behind the desecration of the Italian cemetery in Mogadishu and was believed to have been involved in various assassinations, including those of foreigners working in Somaliland (althouth the charges against him were dropped for lack of evidence by a Somaliland court in December 2006). He was also thought to be behind the killing of the prominent peace activist Abdulkadir Yahya Ali in Mogadishu in July 2005.

Ayro was a product of the Islamist strategy of detaching young men from the influence of the traditional social structure and replacing those influences with an alternative program. Not only did Ayro have no religious credentials, he was not part of the political and social establishment. This is what ultimately led to tensions with local power holders. But precisely because he was not part of the establishment, Ayro could say and do things to mobilize followers that more conventional leaders would not attempt. As William Reno notes, he was a new kind of outlaw of the sort that always destabilizes established authority.[55]

Other ex-AIAI leaders who played important roles in the ICU include Yusuf Mohamed Siad and Hassan Abdullah Hersi al-Turki. Siad, also known as Yusuf Indha'adde, is believed to be the person behind arming the courts' militias. Indha'adde is from the same Ayr branch of the Hawiye as Aweys and Ayro. He styles himself a sheikh (although he has very little knowledge of Islam) and governor of the Lower Shabelle region of Somalia. Indha'adde was named deputy of the executive committee of the Islamic Courts Council. He started receiving arms from Eritrea together with Aweys around 2005.[56] Upon making some of his militia available to the ICU, Indha'adde was appointed head of the military wing of the ICU.[57] Al-Turki, a native

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55 William Reno, review of monograph.

56 West, 2006.

57 Michael A. Williams, "An Interim Agreement Gives Islamists an Edge in Somalia," September 7, 2006.

of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, was a leader of AIAI. He is believed to have links to al-Qaeda, and was designated under Executive Order 13224 as a financer of terrorism. He subsequently became a leader of the ICU militia in the lower Jubba region, near the Kenyan border.

The ICU's Rule in Mogadishu (May–December 2006)

The ICU came to power with in Mogadishu with the support of Hawiye clan elders and businessmen who welcomed the Courts' use of Islamic law to restore order in the city. After four months of fighting (February to May 2006), the ICU defeated the ARPCT, a coalition of Mogadishu warlords supported by the United States and several East African countries.[58]

The ICU's promise to provide security was the main reason for its popularity in the early stages of its rule (even among secular Somalis who were tired of the warlords' excesses). Each court usually had a chairman, a vice-chairman, four judges, an advisory council of elders, and a committee to manage the money brought in from court appearances, fines, and control of checkpoints at the boundaries of its jurisdiction. The courts dealt with both criminal and civil cases and drew on the authority of the clan elders to set up their own militia and provide places of detention for prisoners.[59] Almost all of the courts were based upon Hawiye subclans in Mogadishu and surrounding cities. The main courts are shown in Table 4.2.

The courts removed the checkpoints, collected weapons from warlord militias, and promoted Islam as a unifying alternative to clan

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[58] The Mogadishu warlords were associated with the faction in the TFG opposed to TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf and Prime Minister Ali Geedi. The TFG was established at the Eldoret and Mbagathi conference held in Kenya from 2002 to 2004 under international auspices to unify the Somali factions. After a split in the TFG, one of the factions, led by the speaker of the parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, moved to Mogadishu. The majority faction, led by President Yusuf and backed by Ethiopia and Kenya, moved to the Somali town of Jowhar and later to Baidoa. When Sharif Hassan's coalition effectively collapsed at the beginning of 2006, the religious militias and the Mogadishu warlord began to vie for control of Mogadishu, leading to the ICU's victory in May 2006.

[59] "Understanding Somalia," 2006.

Table 4.2
Islamic Courts, Somalia

Court name	Subclan	Clan	City
Polytechnic and Ifka Halane	Ayr, Habr Gedir	Hawiye	Mogadishu
Sii Sii (Yaaqshid)	Harti, Abgaal	Hawiye	Mogadishu
Circole (Shirkole)	Saleban, Habr Gedir	Hawiye	Mogadishu
Milk Factory	Duduble	Hawiye	Mogadishu
Al-Furqan	Sa'ad, Habr Gedir	Hawiye	Mogadishu
Hareryale and Daynile	Murursade	Hawiye	Mogadishu
Bal'ad	Wa'budhan, Abgaal	Hawiye	Bal'ad
Tarabuunka	Baadi 'Adde	Hawiye	Mogadishu
Al-Huda		Shiikhaal	

SOUCE: RAND (compiled from the speeches and press releases of the Islamic Courts officials, 2006).

loyalties. This arrangement worked for two or three months after the ICU takeover of Mogadishu but then began to fall apart because of tensions within the ICU between the mainstream and radical factions.

The mainstream faction was led by ICU Chairman Sheikh Sharif Ahmed (a member of the Abgaal subclan of the Hawiye). Sheikh Sharif was educated in Mogadishu, Libya, and Sudan, and was associated with the Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a, a traditional Sufi association. He was a former lieutenant of Mohamed Dheere, a warlord who was a member of the Ethiopia-backed Somali Reconciliation and Reconstruction Council, a loose coalition of nearly 20 clan-based political-military factions. Sheikh Sharif also worked with Hussein Aideed (the son of the late Mogadishu warlord Mohamed Aideed) during the Ethiopian-sponsored Sodere peace process in the mid-1990s.

Sheikh Sharif had a falling out with Mohamed Dheere in 2003 and was forced to leave Jowhar for Mogadishu. On his return to Mogadishu, he was instrumental in creating the Sii Sii court in the Yaaqshid district of north Mogadishu. When the ICU came to power, Sheikh Sharif appeared as the moderate voice, calling for dialogue and reconciliation. However, the radicals in the ICU moved quickly to control the courts. The ICU became the Supreme Islamic Court of Somalia in June 2006, with a 93-member shura, chaired by Aweys, to provide

policy. Sheikh Sharif was pushed down to the post of chairman of the executive committee, which implements the directives of the shura, with two radical Salafi clerics as his deputies. Thus, although the radicals controlled only three of the courts, they effectively seized control of the movement.[60]

The radicals' source of power was the Shabaab (shabaab means "the youth"), a corps of fanatical young Somalis trained and indoctrinated by the aforementioned Ayro with the assistance of foreign fighters.[61] Other militias loyal to the ICU did not have the same level of commitment; they were just clan militias paid to enforce the courts' writ. As their name suggests, most of the Shabaab were young men in their late teens or early twenties who grew up in the civil war, held a rigid view of Islam, and often acted in direct contradiction to the ICU's stated goals and objectives. The Shabaab also offered an alternative to the clan, drawing instead on a wide base of recruits from all clans.[62] (But it was also risky for these young men to detach themselves from the main source of protection in Somali society in favor of an uncertain new one.)[63]

Within the radical faction, according to sources familiar with the situation in Mogadishu, there were divergences in strategy between Aweys and Ayro. On the one hand, Aweys' goal was essentially nationalist: He wanted to reabsorb all parts of greater Somalia—the lands in the Horn of Africa where ethnic Somalis predominate—into a single state ruled by shari'a.[64] Ayro's goal, on the other hand, was to link the struggle in Somalia to the global jihad. This view is given credence by

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[60] "Understanding Somalia," 2006.

[61] It is not clear if these were al-Qaeda trainers or just foreign militants.

[62] "The Fight for Mogadishu: The Rise and Fall of the Islamic Courts," Jamestown Foundation event, Washington, D.C., February 28, 2007. See also Andrew McGregor, "The Leading Factions Behind the Somali Insurgency," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor,* Vol. 5, No. 8, April 26, 2007a; "'Extremist' Splinter Group of Somali Islamic Courts Formed," *Somaliland Times*, August 12, 2006.

[63] William Reno, review of monograph.

[64] Interview with Nairobi-based correspondent who travels frequently to Mogadishu, May 2007.

Ayro's links to al-Qaeda. Until the fall of Mogadishu, senior al-Qaeda figures Abu Talha al-Sudani (aka Tariq Abdullah) and Fazul Mohammed ("the Comoran"), believed to be the head of al-Qaeda in East Africa, were both under the protection of the Shabaab. Fazul Mohammed is under indictment in the United States for his alleged participation in the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings and is suspected of being the mastermind of the Mombasa terrorist attacks of November 22, 2002. There were reports that Ayro, al-Sudani, and Fazul Mohammed had been killed in U.S. air strikes after the collapse of the ICU, but these reports turned out to be false.

The radicalization of the ICU and its ever-stricter enforcement of Islamic law, which infringed on traditional Somali values and customs, lost it support among the population. A Western female correspondent reports that each time she met with a ICU leader she was forced to dress more and more conservatively, until she was finally wearing an *abaya* with a *niqab*, a face veil covering all but her eyes.[65] The ICU's efforts to ban the use of *khat*, a narcotic leaf commonly consumed throughout the Somali cultural zone, provoked a great deal of opposition and even riots.[66]

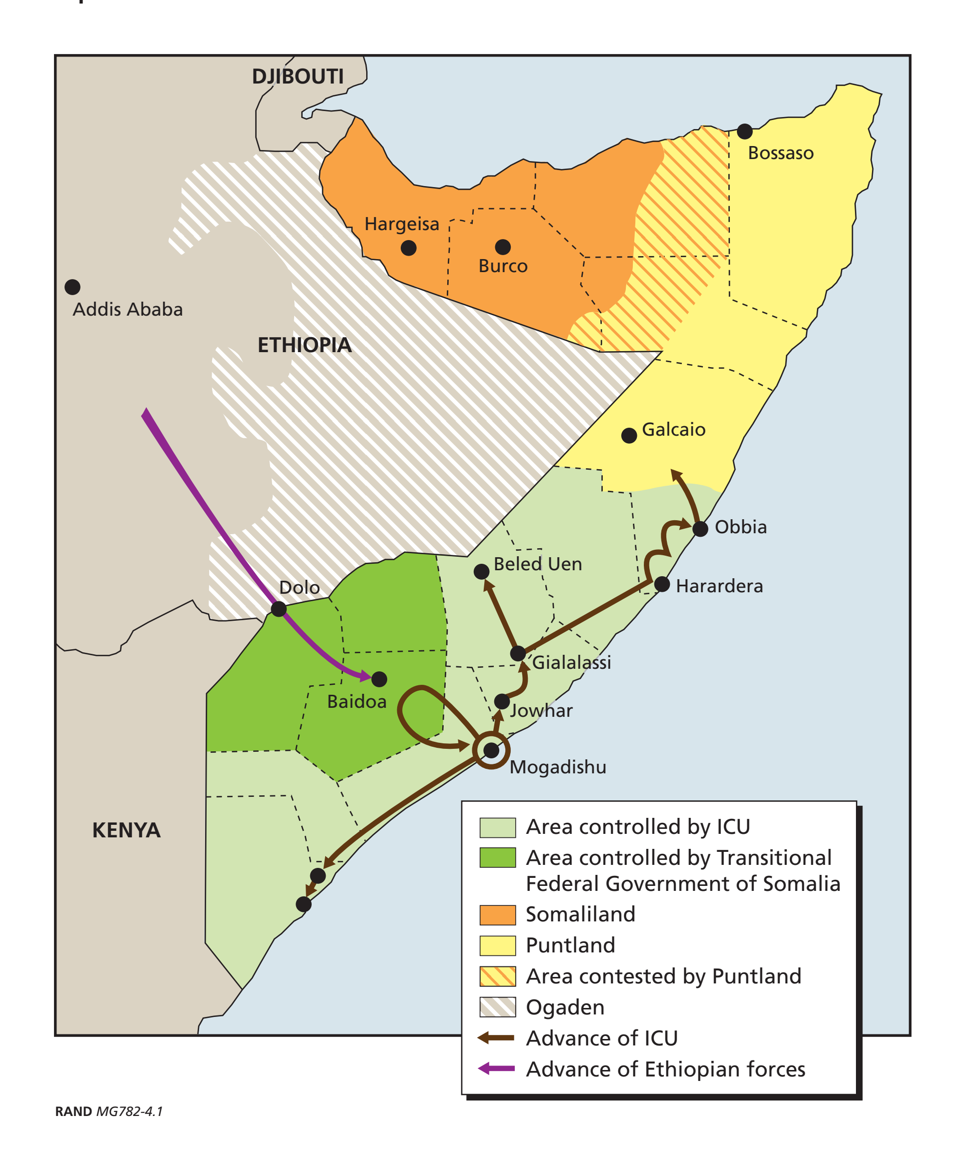
Although the ICU was weakened by internal divisions and growing unpopularity due to its religious coercion, its mishandling of relations with Ethiopia and the subsequent conflict led directly to its downfall. After the ICU seized control of Mogadishu, it moved to extend its control to the north and the south and threatened the TFG in Baidoa. (See Figure 4.1, which shows the territory controlled or influenced by the ICU at its greatest extent.) The Arab League sponsored negotiations in Khartoum between the TFG and the ICU in an attempt to promote

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65 "The Fight for Mogadishu," 2007.

66 "The Fight for Mogadishu," 2007. However, according to a source familiar with social conditions in Somalia, there was actually a great deal of support for the banning of the khat. The demonstrators were those affected by the ban (sellers) and consumers, but many Somalis, including some who chewed it, were for the banning but thought that the courts needed to take account of the needs of the mainly women vendors who were raising their families on the money they earned from selling khat.

Figure 4.1
Expansion of the ICU



RAND *MG782-4.1*

an accommodation, but the negotiations failed and the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia ensued.[67]

After the disbanding of the ICU, Sheikh Sharif Ahmed headed toward the Kenyan border, where he surrendered to Kenyan authorities on January 21, 2007. He later moved to Yemen and subsequently to Eritrea, where he allied with the faction led by the former speaker of the TFG parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Ahmed.

Having been installed in power by Somalia's traditional enemies, the Ethiopians, the TFG started its rule in Mogadishu at a significant political disadvantage. Nevertheless, some observers detected a willingness on the part of the Somali public to give the TFG the benefit of the doubt. There was a window of opportunity after the ICU fled Mogadishu for the TFG to demonstrate its ability to provide security and prevent the reemergence of warlordism, but the TFG squandered this opportunity. A visitor's impression of Mogadishu at the beginning of 2007 was that militia roadblocks were going up again and that the country was reverting to a state of warlordism.[68]

Trends in Post-ICU Somalia

Aside from the "re-wardlordization" of southern Somalia, the gravest threat to stability and security in the region is the reemergence of a radical Islamist movement. The core of the ICU militia, the Shabaab*,* has gone to ground in Mogadishu but remains very much intact and deadly and awaits an opportunity to resurface. Assassinations of TFG officials and allies, suicide bombings, and other bombing and attacks against

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[67] According to some sources, the negotiations failed because of the ICU's demand for the withdrawal of foreign (read Ethiopian) forces from Somalia. See "Somalia: Govt Rejects Outcome of Speaker's Talks with Islamic Courts," Global Security, Nov. 13, 2006. However, well-informed sources in the region maintain that the first two rounds of talks in Khartoum went well, but the Ethiopians used their influence with the TFG to cause the latter to withdraw from the negotiations. Ethiopia's motivations are discussed in the body of this monograph.

[68] Interview with international source in Nairobi who travels frequently to Mogadishu, May 2007.

the TFG and Ethiopians have been on the rise. The upsurge in suicide bombings, previously unknown in Somalia, is particularly troubling and indicates that tactics associated with al-Qaeda–linked groups are spreading. The first suicide attack reported in Somalia was in Baidoa in September 2006, targeting TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf. The blast and a subsequent gun battle killed Yusuf's brother and ten others. In May 2007, Ugandan peacekeepers stationed at the port of Mogadishu arrested a man who was attempting a suicide bombing.[69] Another suicide bomber, "Martyr Adam Salad Adam," made a video in which he is seen reading from the Quran and urging Somalis to defend their country against "invaders." He later is seen driving off into the distance and exploding, apparently near Ethiopian troops.[70] In June 2007, a suicide bomber crashed a Toyota Land Cruiser loaded with explosives through the security gate of TFG Prime Minister Geedi's home in Mogadishu and detonated them, killing six guards and damaging the building.[71]

On February 29, 2008, the U.S. Department of State designated the Shabaab as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist organization. The Shabaab responded by stating that the designation was "only more evidence of the intimate connection between [the United States] and the Ethiopians." The Shabaab called on all Somalis to join forces against "the enemies of our religion."[72] Incidents such as the al-Hidayat mosque episode in Mogadishu in April 2008, in which, according to eyewitnesses, Ethiopian troops entered the mosque and killed 11 civilians, including a number of preachers and the imam of the mosque, played into the hands of the Shabbab.[73]

It is unclear how the killing of the Shabaab's military leader, Ayro, and several of his commanders on May 1, 2008, will affect the dynam-

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[69] "AU Forces Foil a Suicide Attack," SomaliNet, May 7, 2007.

[70] Elizabeth A. Kennedy, "Somalian Tactics Hint of al-Qaeda," AP, May 25, 2007.

[71] "Somali Prime Minister Survives Bomb Attack," CNN, June 3, 2007.

[72] NEFA Foundation, " 'Shabaab al-Mujahideen' Announces New Campaign of Terrorism in Somalia," April 5, 2008.

[73] "Slaughter in Mogadishu Mosque Inflames Somali Conflict," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Focus,* Vol. 5, No. 17, April 30, 2008. The Ethiopians blamed the Shabbab for the killings.

ics of the insurgency in Somalia. In the months preceding the U.S. air strike that killed Ayro, the Shabaab had intensified its operations in central and southern Somalia, importing Iraqi tactics of planting roadside bombs and assassinating targeted individuals. The Shabaab militia has also sought to draw TFG and Ethiopian forces from Mogadishu by capturing and briefly holding towns, while avoiding open encounters with the Ethiopian army.[74]

The majority of regional officials and analysts consulted in the field research for this project believe that continued conflict and disorder in southern Somalia can only be prevented if there is a political settlement that includes all of the Somali factions. The obstacle to reconciliation, in this view, is foreign, i.e., Ethiopian, involvement and the unwillingness of the Yusuf-led TFG to deal with the opposition. As an official in a neighboring country said, the TFG needs to bring people together instead of leaving them outside the political process. If left outside, they will continue to fight.[75]

In the view of many regional observers, TFG President Yusuf does not appear to be interested in serious negotiations with the opposition because he believes he can prevail militarily with Ethiopia's support. As a Western diplomatic source in Nairobi stated, "Yusuf is a warlord. He understands force and power, but he does not know how to engage in political dialogue."[76] Yusuf's interests coincide with those of the Ethiopian government. The general view among Somalis is that Ethiopia wants to keep Somalia weak and divided, although the Ethiopians can reasonably counterargue that in invading Mogadishu they were protecting their national security from an emerging threat in Somalia.[77]

An international organization official in Nairobi involved in the initiative to create the transitional Somali government has no doubt that the ICU represented a genuine threat to Ethiopia; He believes

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[74] Sunguta West, "Strategy of Somalia's Islamists Survives Death of Militant Leader," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Focus,* Vol. 5 No. 18, May 6, 2008.

[75] Interview with regional government official, May 2007.

[76] Interview with Western diplomatic source, Nairobi, May 2007.

[77] This assessment is based on discussions with Somali political personalities and analysts in East Africa, May 2007.

that if the ICU had been able to consolidate control of Mogadishu it would have allowed foreign extremists to move in. "Maybe the wheels would have come off [from the ICU regime]," he said. "The ICU had internal conflicts, but those could have been kept under control. They would have purged each other and eventually would have consolidated power."[78]

For the moment, the Ethiopians appear to have achieved their goals in Mogadishu: (1) removing Eritrean influence; (2) preventing the Ogaden and Oromo separatists from establishing a base in Somalia; and (3) removing the entity that provided anti-Ethiopian separatists with a platform. The problem for Ethiopia is that it cannot maintain 30,000–40,000 troops in Somalia indefinitely. In June 2007, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi acknowledged that Ethiopia had made a "wrong political calculation" in entering Somalia.[79] There are already signs of economic and political strain on Ethiopia. Moreover, there is a danger that the conflict in Somalia could develop into a religious conflict, pitting Muslims around the Horn against Ethiopian Christians.[80]

For the United States, the Ethiopian occupation has removed the immediate problem of a radical ICU faction sheltering terrorists linked to al-Qaeda, but it gives the radicals a chance to link their program to a widely respectable Somali nationalism. It could therefore make the problem of terrorist sanctuaries in Somalia worse over the long term.

The dilemma is that, if the Ethiopians stay, the TFG is unlikely to gain legitimacy and acceptance. If the Ethiopians leave, the TFG could fall. The way out, according to these same regional sources, is for the TFG to establish a national (i.e., broad-based) army with external support and bring in the moderate faction of the opposition, e.g., the former Speaker Sharif Hassan and Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmad and their supporters. As part of this deal, the Ethiopians would leave. In

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[78] Author's interview with international organization official, Nairobi, May 2007.

[79] Stephanie McCrummen, "Ethiopian Premier Admits Errors on Somalia," *Washington Post,* June 29, 2007, p. A16.

[80] Author's interview with international organization official, Nairobi, May 2007.

this view, the Ethiopian army cannot realistically be replaced by an African Union (AU) force without a political settlement in place.[81]

The Asmara-based opposition maintains that it is willing to negotiate with the Yusuf-led TFG, but that negotiations must take place in a neutral place, not in Mogadishu as long as Ethiopian forces are there. Moreover, the goal should be "genuine reconciliation" which means, according to the Asmara group, that Yusuf needs to demonstrate political will to enter into an agreement by arranging for the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces prior to the negotiations. The Ethiopians could be replaced by an international force, but not by a force led by the AU because the AU is acting as "cover" for Ethiopia. According to the Asmara-based opposition, African forces could be part of the international force, but not under AU leadership.[82]

In the view of a highly placed officer in a regional intelligence service, the hardening of the position of such ICU personalities as Sheikh Sharif (hitherto regarded as a moderate) since arriving in Asmara is due to having come under the influence of Eritrea. When he was in Yemen, for instance, Sheikh Sharif was favorable to a settlement. Therefore, in this view, in order to move a negotiating process forward, it is imperative to remove the opposition from Asmara.[83] Some members of the Somali opposition appear to understand the problem of being based in Asmara. They acknowledge that it gives Ethiopia the possibility of presenting them as part of Eritrea's proxy war against Ethiopia and distracts attention from the Somali issue. They agreed they do not want to be part of the Eritrean-Ethiopian dispute. If there was another place they could go to, they said, they would go there, but "Asmara is the best of a bad lot."[84]

The success of this scenario—negotiations between the Yusuf-led TFG and the Asmara-based opposition—hinges on detaching the "moderate" from the "radical" element in the Asmara group. However,

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81 Author's interview with regional government official, May 2007.

82 Author's discussion with Somali opposition representatives, Djibouti, May 2007.

83 Author's interview with regional intelligence officer, May 2007.

84 Author's discussion with Somali opposition representatives, Djibouti, May 2007.

international sources in Nairobi who were deeply involved in discussions with the ICU between May and November 2006 say that the Islamist movement (the former ICU) is controlled by hard-liners whose vision is a strict Salafi state and that the moderates have no power and can only have a minimal role in the peace process.[85] According to a Western diplomatic source, involving the ICU in the negotiations would be counterproductive. The Islamic Courts do not exist anymore, and involving them in the negotiations would throw them a lifeline and allow them to create a new track for them to win support from Arab countries.[86]

In this view, the way ahead is to promote negotiations between the TFG and the Hawiye Leadership Committee—a nonviolent group that claims to speak for Mogadishu's dominant Hawiye clan—that has been conducting discussions with Yusuf. One important consideration is that not all of the Hawiye have been left out of the TFG. The Abgaal subclan holds some very prominent positions. So the conflict is not just between the TFG and the Hawiye but also among subclans of the Hawiye. The opposition is centered on the Habr Gedir subclan (and the Ayr branch within this subclan), which has dominated the political and economic life of Mogadishu for the last 16 years, but they are only one branch of a subclan.

For this approach to work, Yusuf would have to forge a government of national reconciliation with the major Hawiye sectors that have been left out of the process. This would isolate the Asmara group and progressively reduce the popularity and strength of the Islamists. Instead, in the view of many officials and analysts, Yusuf and the Ethiopians are seeking a military solution and trying to disempower and break the unity of the Hawiye. If they fail, regional observers fear, the Islamists will regain their strength.[87] In the end, therefore, preventing radicalization of the Somali population and the development or consolidation of terrorist sanctuaries in Somalia is contingent on the

[85] Author's interview with international official involved in Somali reconciliation process, Nairobi, May 2007.

[86] Author's interview with Western diplomatic source, Nairobi, May 2007.

[87] Author's interview with regional government official, May 2007.

reconstitution of a Somali government that enjoys broad support and the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Mogadishu.

Other Al-Qaeda-Linked Networks

Extremist groups with links to al-Qaeda are also present in Eritrea, Somaliland, and Sudan. The main violent Islamist group in Eritrea is the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM), based in Sudan, which seeks the overthrow of the Asmara government and the establishment of an Islamic state in Eritrea. In March 2006, a group calling itself the Islamic Eritrean Reform Movement (possibly another name for the EIJM) came to the attention of the public with a communiqué announcing five operations against Eritrean military targets. The attacks, according to the group, resulted in the death of 22 Eritrean soldiers and the capture of intelligence documents and arms.[88]

Somalilanders point to the relative absence of terrorism in Somaliland. The only terrorist attacks in Somaliland were the killing of a British couple and an Italian doctor in 2003 and a Kenyan consultant for an international humanitarian assistance agency in 2004. Several individuals were arrested in connection with the killings and confessed to links with groups in the south. This can be explained by the strong hold of traditional clan elders on Somaliland society and on the presence of relatively well-developed government institutions. However, while there have been no terrorist attacks since 2004, well-informed Western diplomatic sources in Nairobi believe that there is a strong underground Islamist movement in Somaliland that could surface if the political situation in Somaliland deteriorates. As noted earlier, Sheikh Ali Warsame, the former head of AIAI, is based in his hometown of Bur'o, Somaliland.

A discussion of extremist groups in the Horn of Africa cannot be complete without taking note of Takfir wal-Hijra, a secretive extremist

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[88] "The Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement," in Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2006a; SITE Intelligence Group, "A Military Statement of the Islamic Eritrean Reform Movement to the Islamic Nation and a List of Five Operations Executed in Eritrea," March 28, 2006.

group that originated in Egypt and made its appearance in the region in the 1970s. Like many other extremist groups, the group originated as a splinter of the Muslim Brotherhood. The group's leader, Shukri Mustafa, was executed by the Egyptian authorities in 1978. Some of its former members were linked to Sadat's assassination in 1981. The group's ideology is summarized by the concepts of takfir (excommunication), which takfiris apply to other Muslims who are declared to be *kufr* (infidels), and *hijra*, which refers to separation from a supposedly polluted state and society. Group members, therefore, tend to isolate themselves from their broader communities.[89]

In the 1990s, the Sudanese branch of Takfir wal-Hijra branded Sudan's NIF government as an infidel government and anyone who did not share Takfir wal-Hijra's creed as a nonbeliever. The group was responsible for a number of terrorist attacks on civilians, including an attack in December 2000 on members the Ansar Al-Sunna Al-Mohamadiya Sufi order, in which 25 people were killed and 60 critically injured. In 1995 the group planned to assassinate bin Laden, who was then residing in Sudan, because his views were considered to be too liberal.[90] There are reports of small takfiri communities in Mogadishu, Bossaso, and other towns that avoid contact with other Somalis but have no known links to other extremists or a record of violence.[91] In fact, little is known about the Somali Takfir wal-Hijra, but the group's secretiveness generates fear and suspicion. There are rumors, for instance, that many businesspeople in Somalia are covert members of the group.[92]

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[89] The group refers to itself as Jam'at al-Muslimun, or Muslim Community. The name Takfir wal-Hijra, which is more descriptive of its actual beliefs, was given to it by the Egyptian media and police. "Shukri Mustafa (1942–1978)," *Perspectives on World History and Current Events* (PWHCE), 2005.

[90] Gamal Nkrumah, "Showdown in Sudan," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online,* Issue No. 512, December 14–20, 2000.

[91] ICG, 2005b, p. 12.

[92] Author's information from Somali source.

CHAPTER FIVE

Countering Terrorism in East Africa

Current Counterterrorism Programs

The importance that the United States and its coalition partners, particularly the United Kingdom and France, attach to the security challenges posed by terrorism, state collapse, insurgencies, and other threats to stability in East Africa is manifested in their military presence and security cooperation programs with regional states.

The U.S. military presence in the region is centered in Djibouti, the headquarters of the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa. The CJTF-HOA is part of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), which was stood up on October 1, 2008. CJTF-HOA's area of responsibility (AOR) encompasses Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Yemen, and the Seychelles. The CJTF-HOA also conducts projects in Uganda and Tanzania. The CJTF-HOA helps to align planning among the three combatant commands that it straddles and sustains and shapes coalition partner participation in combined activities. The CJTF-HOA's strategic objectives are to foster a regional perspective on security problems, build littoral capabilities, and support the AU and UN peacekeeping operations in its AOR. The CJTF-HOA, for instance, helped to put together the logistical plan to lift and support Ugandan troops in the AU peacekeeping force deployed to Mogadishu after the overthrow of the ICU regime.[1]

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[1] Author's discussions at CJTF-HOA, Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, May 2007. See also the CJTF-HOA Web site, http://www.hoa.centcom.mil.

Naturally, given the entrenched terrorist threat in East Africa, building the counterterrorism capabilities of regional states is a major part of the CJTF-HOA mission. Together with the British, CJTF-HOA personnel have conducted counterterrorism training in Yemen and helped to build the Yemeni Coast Guard; provided military training to Ethiopia, Uganda, and Djibouti; and trained the navies of Kenya and Djibouti.

As other past and current counterinsurgency and counterterrorism campaigns show, civil affairs operations can be critical in gaining the support of the population against terrorist elements. The CJTF-HOA has a strong focus on civil affairs and has provided civil affairs training to Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Djibouti, and Yemen; renovated schools in Djibouti and Ethiopia; provided medical and veterinary services across its AOR; and drilled wells in Kenya. As of May 2007, CJTF-HOA comprised about 1,100 U.S. military, civilian, and partner country personnel, including 700 U.S. combat personnel. Given the topography of the CJTF-HOA AOR, most of the cargo and personnel move by air. Air assets include transport helicopters and C-130s.[2]

The main Western counterterrorism programs in East Africa are the U.S.-led East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI) modeled on the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI)[3] and the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI).[4] The EACTI seeks to

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[2] Author's discussions at CJTF-HOA, Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, May 2007, and CJTF-HOA Web site.

[3] The TSCTI builds on the Pan Sahel Initiative, completed in early 2004, which focused on Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad. TSCTI added Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria. The initiative seeks to strengthen counterterrorism capabilities, enhance and institutionalize cooperation among security forces in the region, and promote democratic governance. The U.S. military component of the TSCTI is Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans-Sahara (OEF-TS). EUCOM executes OEF-TS through military-to-military activities and exercises. "Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative [TSCTI]," GlobalSecurity.org; "Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans Sahara (OEF-TS)," GlobalSecurity.org.

[4] GPOI, presented by the United States at the G8 Summit in June 2004, is a five-year program to increase peacekeeping capabilities worldwide. The main goals of GPOI are the following: (1) train and, where appropriate, provide suitable nonlethal equipment to 75,000 military peace support operations troops worldwide, with emphasis on Africa; (2) arrange a transportation and logistics support system to help troops deploy to peace support opera-

bolster the security of the East African region by channeling funds into several key areas: (1) military training for border and coastal surveillance; (2) programs designed to strengthen the control of the movement of people and goods; (3) aviation security capacity-building; (4) assistance for regional efforts to counter terrorism financing; and (5) police training.[5]

It is too early to make a definite assessment of the success or failure of the U.S. approach to combating terrorism in East Africa. One problem is how to measure success. Developing and employing metrics to determine whether the CJTF-HOA's nonkinetic operations are having a counterterrorism impact presents difficult analytical and implementation problems. Another question is the sustainability of civic action projects. There is anecdotal information of civil projects, such as schools and wells built by the United States and other foreign donors, that did not fully produce the anticipated benefits because they lacked a supporting infrastructure—for instance, clinics were built without proper logistical or professional health support.[6]

Ambassador David Shinn, a former senior State Department Africa expert, takes note of the successes of CJTF-HOA and EACTI activities in building capacity and fostering engagement with key African partners, but he also notes that neither program has had much effect in Somalia. This points to the inability of the EACTI approach to address terrorism effectively in failed states. For this approach to work, there have to be partners that have some level of legitimacy and functionality.[7]

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tions and help sustain them in the field; and (3) increase the number of gendarme or stability police units able to participate in peace operations. U.S. Department of State, "Global Peace Operations Initiative."

5 William Pope, "Opening Remarks," speech before the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative Conference, Kampala, Uganda, April 21, 2004.

6 Some of these points were made by Jean-Philippe Peltier, director, Sub-Saharan African Orientation Course, U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, in a private communication, February 15, 2008.

7 Cited in Thomas Dempsey, *Counterterrorism in African Failed States: Challenges and Potential Solutions,* Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, April 2006, p. 22.

The "hearts and minds" approach is undoubtedly a necessary component of an effective counterterrorism campaign, but it does relatively little to strengthen the social networks and relationships that are the principal obstacle to radicalization in East Africa. There is a risk that a state-centered approach, in places where the state is dysfunctional, such as Somalia, may produce a counterinsurgency model that could unintentionally weaken the resistance of local social structures to radical infiltration. An alternative strategy may be to promote partnering with civil society and customary authorities to integrate social networks into community policing and a broader stabilization project.[8]

Recommendations

The counterterrorism assistance programs that are now being implemented in East Africa, if sustained, could help to lay the groundwork for a more robust regime of counterterrorism collaboration in East Africa. Counterterrorism assistance alone, however, is unlikely to provide an effective long-term solution to the challenges of Islamist extremism and terrorism in East Africa. In fact, unless sensitively implemented, counterterrorist operations could backfire by alienating and radicalizing Muslims who otherwise might not be inclined to support extremist groups. For instance, the closing of the Somali hawala enterprise al-Barakaat, suspected of terrorism financing, affected thousands of Somalis whose savings were lost when the company's funds were frozen.[9]

Until Ayro's killing in May 2008, neither the al-Qaeda operatives wanted for their roles in the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, who were believed to have taken refuge in Somalia, nor their key Somali allies had been killed or captured. Over the long term, the U.S. decision to support the Ethiopian invasion and occupation of

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[8] William Reno, review of monograph.

[9] International Crisis Group, *Counter-Terrorism in Somalia: Losing Hearts and Minds?* Africa Report No. 95, July 11, 2005a, p. 15.. No convincing evidence has been produced that al-Barakaat was in fact, involved in terrorism financing.

Mogadishu may prove to be a strategic error. The Ethiopian occupation and the tactics employed by Ethiopian forces in Mogadishu have generated great resentment among Somalis and created opportunities that are being exploited by radicals.[10]

The most effective barriers to the infiltration of terrorists and radical ideologies in the region are not applications of military force but the cultural and social predispositions of East African Muslims. An effective long-term solution would require attacking the conditions that make the region hospitable to extremist and terrorist elements. A strategic approach would include the following elements:

Strengthen state institutions and civil society. This could be done through programs that augment human capital, improve public administration and the delivery of government services, professionalize (and in some cases decriminalize) military and police forces, and support the work of benign nongovernmental organizations.

Consider making use of the OSD/PA&E–funded Defense Resource Management Studies (DRMS) program in East Africa to help rationalize and strengthen regional countries' military and internal security structures. This program helps partner countries rationalize their defense resource management systems and decisionmaking process, build the staff skills necessary to implement the project, and begin to analyze the real-life issues confronting them.[11] It should be pursued in addition to ongoing work by CJTF-HOA to train East African militaries.

Take stronger steps to promote a political settlement among Somali factions that permits the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Mogadishu. There are two possible negotiating tracks. One is between the TFG and the Asmara-based opposition. This track may not be feasible because of lack of political will on either side, but an effort should be made to detach the moderate (or less radical) sector of

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[10] This judgment is based on the author's discussions with a broad spectrum of Somali opinion in the Horn of Africa. See also Andrew McGregor, "Battleground Somalia: America's Uncertain Front in the War on Terror," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor,* Vol. 5, No. 12, June 21, 2007c.

[11] Hinkle, 2007.

the Asmara group, possibly using the good offices of an Arab League state. The second, possibly more promising track would be to promote negotiations between the TFG and the Hawiye Leadership Committee—a nonviolent group that claims to speak for Mogadishu's dominant Hawiye clan. For this approach to work, a government of national reconciliation that includes the major Hawiye sectors that have been left out of the process would have to be forged. Moving the TFG along this path would require pressure on the TFG (and possibly on the TFG's Ethiopian patrons) by the United States, the European Union, and African partners.

Consider using diplomatic recognition of Somaliland as an incentive to keep Somaliland on a democratic track and to secure effective cooperation in counterterrorism. Unfortunately, the arrest of the leadership of the opposition Qaran Party by the Rayale administration in July 2007 has set back the democratization process in Somaliland. However, an incentive package linked to political reconciliation and free elections could help bring about a restoration of the democratic process. Elements of such a package could include granting Somaliland the status that Montenegro enjoyed prior to formal independence from Serbia-Montenegro. A relationship with Somaliland could also open additional U.S. basing options. As part of a package involving steps toward recognition of Somaliland, the United States could explore U.S. Air Force use of the former Soviet air facility at Berbera (also used by the United States in the 1980s after Somalia changed sides) to augment U.S. air access in the Horn of Africa–Middle East–Persian Gulf region.

Acknowledge that the United States will maintain a military presence in the Horn of Africa for the foreseeable future, and build the appropriate infrastructure to support it. To enhance the effectiveness and preserve the continuity of the CJTF-HOA's interaction with regional militaries, the basing status of the CJTF-HOA should be changed from expeditionary to permanent; tours should be changed from unaccompanied and short term to accompanied and of longer duration.

Assist cooperating regional governments in gaining better control of their borders, both land and maritime. This could be done

by providing training, platforms, and surveillance systems appropriate to the environment and the regional countries' capabilities. Strengthening border control is particularly important in the case of friendly countries bordering on southern Somalia, i.e., Ethiopia and Kenya, to prevent the movement of Somalia-based terrorists across their borders.

Deter external support of radical groups operating in East Africa. Together with coalition partners, the United States needs to reassess its policy toward Eritrea and develop points of leverage on Eritrea to dissuade the Eritrean government from continuing to support extremists in Somalia and Ethiopia.

Reduce the influence of foreign Islamist organizations by identifying mainstream and Sufi Muslim sectors and helping them propagate moderate interpretations of Islam and delegitimize terrorism. Given that Islamist organizations use the provision of social services to advance their agenda, ways should be explored to help moderate Muslim NGOs provide social services and therefore reduce the influence of Islamist NGOs. Of course, this assistance should be extended in ways that do not compromise the credibility of these groups.[12]

Begin to remove barriers to economic growth. There is general agreement in the policy community on the need to promote economic opportunity, especially for the young, in order to reduce the pool of potential jihadi recruits. However, given the magnitude of the barriers to economic growth in East Africa, it would be more realistic to recommend a process to identify and begin to remove or lower these barriers, to the extent feasible. The critical requirement is the establishment of a modicum of order, security, and predictability in the behavior of governments and their agents; mitigation of corruption (at least in the delivery of international assistance); reduction of trade barriers; debt relief where appropriate; and promotion of entrepreneurship, with a focus on small-sized enterprises.

The overall aim should be to build sustained national resilience that is intolerant of, and effective against, terrorists and extremists.

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[12] See the discussion of ways to provide assistance without discrediting the assisted groups in Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Benard, Lowell H. Schwartz, and Peter Sickle, *Building Moderate Muslim Networks,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-574-SRF, 2007.

This can only occur if hard security initiatives are linked with a broader array of policies designed to promote political, social, and economic stability. Without such a two-track approach, there is little chance that counterterrorist modalities will take root.

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